RESUME OF SERVICE CAREER
of
NATHANIEL ROSS THOMPSON, JR., Lieutenant General, 183-20-5652

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: 5 September 1927, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

YEARS OF ACTIVE COMMISSIONED SERVICE: Over 35 years

DATE OF RETIREMENT: 30 June 1986

MILITARY SCHOOLS ATTENDED
The Engineer School, Basic Course
The Transportation School, Basic and Advanced Courses
The Command and General Staff College
The Industrial College of the Armed Forces

EDUCATIONAL DEGREES
Temple University - BS Degree - Accounting
Syracuse University - MBA Degree - Business Administration

MAJOR DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

FROM	TO	ASSIGNMENTS
Jul 75	Sep 77	Director of Logistics, J-4, HQs USREDCOM
Sep 77	Jul 79	Director of Trans, Energy, Trp Spt, ODCSLOG, HQs DA
Jul 79	Aug 83	Commanding General, 21st Spt Cmd, USAREUR
Sep 83	Jun 86	The Inspector General, HQs DA

PROMOTIONS	DATES OF APPOINTMENT
2LT	15 Jun 51
1LT	15 Dec 52
CPT	17 Dec 56
MAJ	28 Jul 61
LTC	6 Aug 65
COL	15 Jun 70
BG	1 Aug 75
MG	1 Jun 79
LTG	19 Jun 81

MEDALS AND AWARDS
Distinguished Service Medal w/Oak Leaf Cluster
Legion of Merit w/Oak Leaf Cluster
Bronze Star Medal
Meritorious Service Medal
Joint Service Commendation Medal
Army Commendation Medal
Senior Parachutist Badge
Joint Chiefs of Staff Identification Badge
Army General Staff Identification Badge

SOURCE OF COMMISSION ROTC (Temple Univ)

INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

Interview with LTG (Ret) Nathaniel R. Thompson, Jr.

LTG Thompson was interviewed by Major Terry Hunter on 10 November 1987 at the Hoffman Building in Alexandria, Virginia.

He started his interview by talking about the 82nd Airborne Division. Next, he talked about his education at Temple University and his enrollment in ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps].

He was sent to the Corps of Engineers and attended the Engineer Basic Course. He then moved on to his assignment with the 201st Combat Engineer Battalion, the 143rd Floating Bridge Companny, and the 51st Transportation Company in Hanau, Germany. He spoke of to the 35th Truck Company.

He discussed his assignment with the 606th Transportation Company at Fort Story. He described how he got from the 606th to the 461st Transportation Company. He spoke of his assignment at the port of Whittier, Alaska. He talked about the duties of his command and the eventual closing of Whittier.

His next assignment dealt with the 557th Heavy Truck Company at Fort Eustis. He talked about the Strike Command. He eventually was assigned to the Transportation School. He talked about running the bookstore and the field training. He moved on to his next assignment which was at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He then was assigned to KMAG [Korean Military Advisory Group] in Korea. When his tour in Korea ended, he was assigned to the Army Staff in budgeting. He talked about going to Okinawa, Japan, to find out what was wrong with the supply system. His next tour deals with the Vietnam War and his command with the 11th Transportation Battalion.

He talked about his assignment to JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff]. He told of his selection to go to ICAF [Industrial College of the Armed Forces]. He then was transferred to Fort Eustis to command the 7th Group. He was transferred to the Transportation School as Assistant Commandant.

He spoke on his assignment at McDill Air Force Base. He spoke on the things that were started and done while he was there. He was assigned to DETRINS [Detailed Routing Instructions] and DCSLOG [Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics]. He was nominated to command the 21st Support Command in Worms, Germany. He described the significant things about the 21st Support Command. His next assignment dealt with the IG [Inspector General]. He commented on what role the IG should play. He spoke on the problems, solutions, lessons learned.

He gave advice to officers who are going to command. He said that don't go with the idea that you know everything. Learn who you can and cannot trust. Find out who are the experts and put them in command. Be flexible to changes. Find out what went wrong. Think through the situation. Learn the good and the bad. Practice the good and eliminate the bad. Your responsibility is to train, teach, and help people.

Good morning sir. This is Army Transportation Oral History interview with Lieutenant General (Retired) Nathaniel R. Thompson, Jr. on 10 November, 1987, here at the Hoffman Building II in Alexandria, Virginia.

MAJ HUNTER: Sir, I'd like to begin before your received your bachelors degree at Temple University. You served as an Enlisted soldier in the 82nd Airborne. Were you drafted or did you join voluntarily?

LTG THOMPSON: Well, at the particular time that I enlisted, it was at the end of World War II. My father agreed that I could enlist once I graduated from high school. I graduated, enlisted, served almost 2 years active duty, and then I stayed in the Reserves for 3 years upon completion of my active duty. The only reason I got out of the Army was because I had made E-6 and all that was left was E-7. I knew I was going to do something different. I wanted to get out and get an education. I went to school on a GI bill, on an athletic scholarship. So that made it easy to go to school.

MAJ HUNTER: Was the 82nd Airborne at Fort Bragg then or was it over in Germany somewhere?

LTG THOMPSON: When I went through basic training, the 82nd was still in Germany. By the time I completed basic, I went to a glider outfit. The 82nd was stationed at Fort Bragg. In order to get out of the Glider Outfit, I volunteered to go to Jump School. I didn't think it was safe riding in gliders. So I came back to the 82nd again. I outsmarted myself. I took my basic at Bragg. I was going to advanced training at Stillwell, back to Bragg for assignment, volunteered to go Airborne to get out of there, and wound up right back there for the third time.

MAJ HUNTER: If my memory serves me correctly, you were born in Pennsylvania. So I guess my question is, why did you enter Temple University?

LTG THOMPSON: Temple is in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It's a Baptist school, it's a city school, and it's an inner city school. You ride the subway to get to Temple. When I got out of the Army in 1947, the chances of getting into Penn were slim or none because that was a well endowed, very high priced school. Even though going on the GI Bill, you had to wait. You had to wait in line to get in. I was interested in getting started and getting it over with. So I went to Temple. Temple is a working man's school, about 35,000 students day and night. It is now a state supported school. It was a private institution.

MAJ HUNTER: Did you get in ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] immediately or later on?

LTG THOMPSON: No. In those days when I started to Temple, they did not have an ROTC unit. After my first year, they had formed one. In my last two years, I joined ROTC. Having had prior service, I only had to serve two years in ROTC and that was sufficient time. In fact, the entire class that I was in (of 52 people in ROTC in that particular year group), 51 of them had prior service. So it was a different unique group of ROTC students.

MAJ HUNTER: What were your initial feelings when you received your RA [Regular Army] commission in the Transportation Corps? Was your heart set on

Infantry and/or Artillery?

LTG THOMPSON: At the time I went to Temple, Temple was a Transportation school, Transportation oriented. I went to Transportation Summer Camp. I had my pick of branches like we still do. I could pick three. I think, initially, I picked Infantry, MP's [Military Police] in TC [Transportation Corps]. But I think because of the Branch orientation at Temple and the fact that I'd gone to ROTC Summer Camp at Fort Eustis, I was assigned to the Transportation Corps. It really didn't make any difference because my game plan was to come back and do my 2 years. The PMS [~~Predicted Manning System~~] Prof. of Mil Science convinced me that I could do 3 years and get a Regular Army commission as a DMG [Distinguished Military Graduate] and it would only cost me 1 year. But in that extra year period, I became convinced that I would stay. But it was a marriage of convenience; it wasn't well thought out. It would just take one more year and it would work and it did work.

As far as being TC, I had no hesitation whatsoever. In those days, you were detailed to Combat Arms. Regular Army officers were all detailed 2 years of Combat Arms. I was detailed to the Corps of Engineers which was a unique experience.

MAJ HUNTER: My next question is that you went to Engineer Officer Basic, and I guess you went to Transportation Officer Basic, and then you went over into Germany?

LTG THOMPSON: I just went to the Engineer Basic. I didn't go to Transportation Basic. I went to Engineer Basic. There were 100 officers in that Basic Class: fifty of them were West Point graduates; forty-nine of them were Engineers. I was the only non-practicing Engineer in that bunch. Academically, I did not excel because I did not understand the stress, strength, and strain of materials that some other people did who had graduated as Engineers. But when it came time to doing practical things such as demolitions and mine fields and those kinds of things, I managed to keep up with my good friends. It was a unique class in that 5 of the officers in that class became Lieutenant Generals. I would guess 6 or 7 others became Major Generals, mostly in the Corps of Engineers.

MAJ HUNTER: Now this time frame was 1952, I believe. Of course at the same time this was going on, it was a war in Korea. I guess most of your classmates went to Korea. But you went to Germany I believe.

LTG THOMPSON: Right. But again, that's just the "luck of the draw." I was assigned to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin. I was assigned to the 201st Combat Engineer Battalion which was the Kentucky National Guard outfit. I was the only non-Kentuckian in the organization. The 143rd Floating Bridge Company was an Oklahoma National Guard Company. The 201st was scheduled to go to Europe. The 143rd was going to go to Korea. The 201st had me transferred over to the 143rd to fill an assignment to go there. Whether the fact that I was the only non-Kentuckian in it that was going to Korea, I don't know. But shortly after that transfer, they flipped them. The 201st went to Korea and was devastated. The 143rd was sent to Europe. So I guess it was just the luck of the draw. There was no great planning on the part of the personnel people. It was just fill a slot (send someone) and I was the one.

I went to Europe, spent the next 2 years in 5th Corps, and wound up commanding the Floating Bridge Company because we changed Company commanders often. The people that were in the Oklahoma National Guard all went home. They took all the officers with them at that time. They took all of the NCOs [Noncommissioned Officers] with them at that time and there was a freeze on promotions in the Army. So we wound up with 2 ingrade sergeants and the rest were acting sergeants. But the advantage was that most of these young fellows were college graduates who were very bright, who accepted the challenge. I had two PHDs [Doctors] in Engineering who were members of that bridge company as platoon sergeants. They were an exceptionally bright group of people. But even though I wound up as the Company Commander for 4 or 5 months at a time, they'd get a new Company commander. He'd get RIFed and they'd get another one. We had the only Bridge Company in all of Europe in the 5th Corps.

Here's an example of how smart they were. At that time, the only time you could work building a bridge was on the Rhein River on the Main River on weekends. So we were working every weekend and these fellows saw a pond out in the Hanau. They decided that if we made that pond bigger and dug a big hole and gave the dozier operators and the construction guys some training, there was a place to do bridge training. So they designed it. They put it together in what is now still in being. Behind Hanau, now a concern, is Camp Opond. It was built by some bright guys out of the 143rd Engineers. Why? So that you wouldn't have to work every weekend while everybody else was doing something else. So I guess the moral of that story is if you get 2 smart people, take advantage of it. Use the smarts that they have. Don't beat them to death and always say "No." That's not a good idea.

MAJ HUNTER: Be open to suggestions, I guess.

LTG THOMPSON: Yes, listen. You might learn something. You can't learn much when your mouth's open all the time.

MAJ HUNTER: Now from the Engineer position, you went to a Transportation assignment.

LTG THOMPSON: Right. I was fortunate enough at that time. In those days, there were many truck battalions, and many truck groups, and truck companies in Europe. I was in Hanau. After about two and a half years in Engineering, my boss, until he got a replacement, would not let me go.

So I transferred over to the 51st Transportation Company in Hanau. I just moved across the street. In that particular assignment, there was one Captain who was a very senior Captain, very elderly gentleman. In fact, he was older than my mother. That's how old he was. He had a great deal of trouble getting to work on time. But again, I was blessed with a good Warrant Officer, and some more smart Sergeants who knew how to get things done. So eventually this Company Commander (I won't say he was relieved) was replaced and transferred up to Battalion headquarters because he seldom showed up for work early enough to sign the Morning Report or to be counted present for duties. So he was moved to the Battalion headquarters where the Battalion commander could keep closer tabs on his body.

I inherited a Second Lieutenant and a Company again. But again, I say the best thing was the caliber of the NCOs. This was at the particular time

when the Army was integrating troop units. We went from all white (I think pure white or pure black units) and this was one of the units when the first units integrated in Europe. Again, I had the good fortune to have a senior E-7 Master Sergeant as a First Sergeant who had been a E-7 since the early 1940s. He was an extremely capable gentleman who understood how to handle this mixture. Because you have to remember, at one time, all black units were superb because they were fighting for their ethnic pride as well as their soldiering capabilities. In fact, there were some units that thrived on that and did an exceptional job. The pride of these particular NCOs that I had carried over made this unit first class. We had the good fortune to excell in everything we did.

What was our job? That truck company supported the one Regiment in the 4th Division. Now you look at how the number of truck units in the active Army today. You wonder how it's going to work. But I had a latoon assigned to a battalion and all they did was haul the soldiers. Of course you're talking about the Fort Bradleys or APCs [Armored Personnel Carriers] or whatever, self generated method of getting them on the battlefield so we would haul soldiers to the line of departure and back away.

What did you have to do then? You had to have soldiers that could follow orders, would keep from getting lost, be able to read a map, and follow instructions. Because you have to remember, in those days, we were not all high school graduates. But we had some very good professional E-5s and E-4s who only wanted to do well what they were doing, except the fact that you had people that could not read and write, and could not sign their own name. But they had a sense of dedication, sincerity, and work ethics that far exceeded some very well-educated people.

It was a drastic change from going from a brigade company with PHD's [Doctor's Degree] to a truck company where there was an entirely different mixture of people. But again, given a chance, given the opportunity to excell, they did it and they did it very well.

The example was that I had a W-4 as a Motor Officer who was back there as a W-4 because he was tired being a Staff Officer and asked to go to a Motor Pool. I guess the most dramatic example of how good he was in those days you had CMMI [Command Maintenance Management Inspection] teams that would descend on you unannounced. At 4:00 in the morning, you would get this terrorist call saying, "They are coming." That was when the whole Corps would descend on you in 2 bus loads to do everything. I got this famous phone call one morning that the Corps Commander was coming, General Hart. General Hart appeared in my Motor Pool, looked at Mr. Clark, who was my Motor Officer, and said, "Where do I know you from?" He said, "Sir, I served with you when I was a Corporal and you were a Second Lieutenant and we served together." He named 2 or 3 places and General Hart's only question was, "Is this unit ready to go to war?" He said, "Yes sir. They're all in good shape except that one that's in the garage in the Motor Pool and that's being fixed." With that, General Hart said, "This unit is past the inspection," and the whole team left. We did not have one other person look at one other thing. They all stopped what they were doing and left, all because General Hart had great faith at that point. He said that it was right and it was right. Again, was it right or was it wrong was an example of complete faith of someone in the building of that particular specialist expert in his field to say, "Yes, it's right."

MAJ HUNTER: CMMI is Corps Maintenance.

LTG THOMPSON: CMMI is Command Maintenance Management Inspection. That's when everyone comes down, all the experts in the world. They would (as we still do) proselyte and take all the experts in a given field, put them all up in the higher headquarters, and then come down to inspect you after they had robbed you of all your expertise. Later, it's the Inspector General. I fought that and didn't think that was such a good idea. But it still happens. You still have the mentality that says, "Boy, I got you." The name of the game is not I got you. It's how to teach people and it's how to train people.

But I guess the strongest thing you can say throughout my career is that I've had the good fortune to work for some people who would allow you to make mistakes, recover from the mistakes and learn, and do good, versus those who would like to eliminate you at the first sign of one mistake. I thought mistakes were weakness. They are not. You train in peace to make mistakes. So you don't do that same thing when you go to war. If you don't live by that theory, you are wasting your time and talents of all the people you have. If you don't make mistakes and you do everything perfect, you're wasting the taxpayers money when you practice perfection because perfection zero defects and 100 percent of anything is almost unfordable. It just amazes me that we have the mentality that everything has to be zero defects, not so. But that was a good unit. It was an enjoyable unit and it had a mission.

In those days, you would pack up. When you had an alert, you would go to the GDP [General Defense Plan]. You had better be prepared with all your gear because you would stay gone for 3, 4, 5 days, or 2 weeks. We picked a unit to go to Grafeld, picked a unit to go off to Billstedt, picked a unit to go somewhere, and gave Army training tests. You didn't know ahead of time. With a sixty vehicle task force of Tussenhausen, you had to have fifty-eight of them running all the time. So you had to have pretty good maintenance standards and you had to have a good combination of drivers. Again, as always, there was a shortage and you would wind up with squad leaders driving trucks and platoon sergeants driving trucks. But the name of the game was when the whistle blew, everybody went, and kept on going. If you had 2 drivers, fine. If you didn't, you had better man those 60 task vehicles and worry about your own stuff later. But it worked and it worked very well.

There was another truck company in the same concern with me, the 35th of the same Battalion. They supported the 5th Corps headquarters and carried all of the rates and the new rates off to their assembly area. The other unit that knew anything about that was the Battalion headquarters that was about 60 miles away. So you really didn't get an awful lot of technical help. If they were going to come visit you, you knew they were coming. You would properly prepare for them. But you really didn't have someone on your case all the time. You were able to function and operate without a great deal of tender loving care from on high.

Again, of the two Battalion commanders that I had, one of them believed in that theory. The other one was a competent gentleman who was a Reserve officer, who later was RIFed, and worked for me as a Spec 5. So one year, he was my Battalion commander. A year later, he was one of my clerks in the supply room. He took it well. His wife never did adjust to that vested change. I guess the other significant thing about Europe was I went there,

first thing got married, and came back with 2 children. One of them is in the Army now. So I guess having had grandchildren born in Germany on second or third generation NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization], I understand how that works.

The most significant thing I would tell you about that lashup was you had to have some independent people who could function independently because when you sent a platoon of trucks off to a battalion, they were broken down into company size pieces and they would be broken down into platoon size pieces. If you didn't have the training to read a map, to pay attention, and know where to get gas, to know how to maintain their truck, you'd loose it. If you had to keep 58 out of 60 going, you couldn't afford to loose too many. There wasn't a radio in every truck and we managed to do it. It worked and it was an abundance of Transportation support. Now, I guess the closest they've got to that was they would say "It's host nation and host nation will do that." In theory, the answer is "yes." In practice, we haven't tried it yet. So we will find out someplace.

MAJ HUNTER: I hope not too soon. Alright sir. From there, you came back from Germany back to, I guess, Fort Eustis and to Fort Story.

LTG THOMPSON: Yes. I was assigned to Fort Eustis. I reported for duty. I was told that there was no assignments there. But there was openings at Fort Story for company commanders that were starting new units. I was asked if I would like to go to Fort Story. I wasn't asked. I was told that I would report to Fort Story. I took my wife and 2 children, drove across on the ferry, went to Fort Story, reported for duty, sat outside of the Deputy Post Commander's Office for 3 days, and finally was allowed inside his office. I was told that I was going to be a company commander and was asked, "How do you like that?" I said, "Hey, that's going to be a piece of cake having done that before a couple of times." He took that as an offense and wasn't too happy with my attitude. So I was assigned to the 606th Transportation Company which was an amphibious truck company. It was a DUKW [Duck, Amphibious Truck] unit. The way it was formed there were 2 battalions on the Post. Everyone on the Post was given his choice of who they could send to the 606th Transportation Company or the 607th. The 607th was also being formed as the sister unit. It was commanded by a fellow by the name of First Lieutenant Earl Harvey who was my next door neighbor. So we got the pick of the litter. We got what everybody else wanted to get rid of. It kind of boggled their minds when you formed a company. The mental attitude of the soldiers that came there was, "Well, they got rid of me. Why am I going to this ragtag outfit?"

So we had the little learning curve there, a little orientation curve, where the Company Clerk couldn't spell my name. I was in the 9th grade before I could spell Nathaniel. But even when he was looking at it, he couldn't spell it on the Morning Report. So it was a trying time for about 2 or 3 months. It was a trying time putting together barracks and putting together equipment. Again, people were given their choice of equipment they wanted to get rid of and we had some real dogs.

But I must say again that it was the strength of the NCOs that helped put that place together. In those days, there was an abundance of second lieutenants and I did have some of them. It was the only unit I ever had where I had a full compliment of second lieutenants. Three of the four then

were exceptional. The other one did not belong in the Army and was later out of the Army. They all got out of the Army. But three of the four were exceptional young gentlemen who knew they had a job to do and did it very well. One of them had worked with his dad. His dad had been in the construction business. So he became my Maintenance Officer. He knew what to do and the NCOs took a liking to all these people, even the one that didn't belong. We put him in a separate inside job where he wasn't out chasing around with soldiers. He got to be the Motor Officer, the Mess Officer, and the Supply Officer. Those things did not require a lot of soldier contact and leadership ability, but more administration ability. He was able to do those things. The moral of that story is if you gather the right people, again, give them a chance to excel. Instill in them a sense of winning, and not being loosers, and not being the leftovers of life. Before we were finished with that unit, we won the best mess hall, and we won the best supply, and we won the best motor pool, and we won everything that was going over there.

When I left the unit, I won a case from the S-4 of the installation because I turned that unit over with no loss of property. There was no statement of charges, no nothing, because we kept up with it all. Again, I had the right kind of people because all they wanted was a chance to prove they were as good as anybody else. Given that chance, they excelled.

MAJ HUNTER: Even that person that was in that supply job.

LTG THOMPSON: It didn't make any difference who they were. If given a chance to excel, they did a first class job. Some of those people are still around at Fort Story. I have fond memories of the things we did. But in those days, there was a lot of tradeoffs. If you wanted something, you go down to the Navy and trade with them. If you went to paint your mess hall or the floor in the barracks, you just went out and traded. That was still a draft environment. Personally, I think that the draft was a good thing because it came time for the IG [Inspector General] inspection. Everyone at the post flunked the IG inspection. It came my turn and I passed the IG inspection. Did we haul the excess stuff off and put it on jeep someplace or a truck? Yes. I was told that the IG was a little strange. Therefore, I saw people poking holes in brand new screens in my mess hall. I said, "What are you doing that for?" He said, "Well, the next guy is sewing up the holes with needle and thread because this guy will say, "Look at the attention to detail," which he did. The IG was not real. He couldn't have been the swiftest guy I know. With brand new copper screens with holes in them sewed up, he must have suspected something.

That's in the days when they moved all the soldiers outside. They slept outside, and made up the beds, and binded everything up with a string. Everybody had Colgate's toothpaste and Lux soap. The toothbrush is one way. The knife, fork, and spoon had to be right with the U.S. up. That was the most significant thing we did. I guess that made the impression on me later as the IG, what we shouldn't be doing. What did we learn out of that? We learned how to be miserable and how to beat the IG. I could beat any IG inspection the world had ever known because my guys went down and got gray deck paint through the Navy. They painted the floors and the barracks corridor. I appointed was a guy by the name of Martin J. Lanigan (who was a New York City cab driver) who could con you out of anything. So when he took the IG through here, you know, we polished the urinals. They were shown the

brassbound and everything looked beautiful. As he was going upstairs, he noticed the gray footprints on the steps where the IG had tracked the paint from the latrine up the steps. So rather than let him see that, he said, "Let me show you the fire escape," and he took him down outside so he wouldn't know it was freshly painted. You can't convince me that we learned anything under that exercise. We celebrated beating the IG inspector, passing the IG inspection. What did we learn? We learned what not to do in later life. A lot of those NCOs there appreciated the fact that you recognized the fact that we didn't learn one thing. They would get you by anything, but they would make sure that we learned something in the process. That was the greatest learning experience you can have.

MAJ HUNTER: How'd you get from the DUKW [Duck, Amphibious Truck] unit, the 606th to the 461st?

LTG THOMPSON: In those days, all TC [Transportation Corps] officers (if you came back from your basic branch, from your Combat Arms Branch) were assigned to the Basic Course. Since I wasn't at Eustis and I was at Fort Story, I had to move over to Fort Eustis, having lived in half of a converted barracks and I painted that half of the barracks. I moved to Fort Eustis for 9 months. I went to the Basic Course which ran the exact same length as the Advanced Course. It was mostly the same material which was repetitious as can be. I did that in 9 months, had another child born at Fort Eustis, and went back to Fort Story. I lived in the other half of the same barracks and I painted the other half of the building because the post Engineers didn't do much. They'd give you the paint, there, period.

Then I was assigned to the 461st. The 461st was probably the reverse of the 606th. It was the number one established unit on post because it also was the 8th Student Company. It was the unit that trained all DUKW [Duck, Amphibious Truck] drivers for the T [Transportation] School or for the Army as a matter of fact.

So I had two units. I had the 8th Student Company and the 461st. The 461st was a TO&E [Table of organization and Equipment] unit. The 8th Student Company was a TDA [Table of Distribution and Allowance] unit. They were both in the same area. There were over 500 soldiers and they would rotate every 4 or 6 weeks. I forgot the exact number. But they would come and go. You kept your TO&E company. Now there was an advantage to that because I got my pick of who was in the 8th Student Company to go in the 461st. The advantage was when you were in the 461st, you didn't do KP [Key Personnel]. In those days, that was unheard of. But the students did KP and the TO&E guys didn't have to do that. The TO&E guys would have 2 or 3 students to help work on their vehicle. So there was a great mark of distinction of being in the barracudas. That was, again, an entirely different atmosphere. At that time, the 606th was on its way out because the 606th was formed up to train soldiers to go to SUNEC [Support Unit North East Command]. It became a different kind of unit. But the 461st (the year I had the 461st), was the showcase unit for Fort Story and Fort Eustis. It was a very good unit. Again, I had 2 different Battalion commanders.

Let me get back to the 606th. We had a Battalion commander in the 606th who was a Lieutenant Colonel then. He was a Lieutenant Colonel years later when I became a Colonel. He was a very fine gentleman, but who was very

hesitant to declare himself. As an example, in those days, Lieutenant [LTG Vincent Mario] Russo and I were in the same battalion. We both smoked cigars as did 3 or 4 other people. This guy would not tell us not to smoke. He didn't smoke. He didn't like smokers. But he was too nice of a guy and he was just consumed by his own niceness. Then when I got to the 461st, the first Battalion commander I had was an old rough and tumble guy by the name of Major A. W. Campbell.

Let me tell you what SUNEC [Support Unit North East Command] is. That was the DEW LINE [Distance Early Warning Line] project. I don't know the Northeastern Command. They are some kind of units. You ought to find out the exact number. But it's the units that go north to run the resupply mission for DEW LINE and the early warning sights way up north. A lot of soldiers at Fort Story and Fort Eustis made a career out of it. They were going there for 3 months every summer. After 3 or 4 tours, you got credit for an overseas tour and never left Fort Eustis. You'll find some of them been there for 12, 14, or 16 years and never left town.

MAJ HUNTER: You were talking about A. W. Campbell.

LTG THOMPSON: A. W. Campbell was my Battalion commander. He was a Major commanding the Battalion. Why? Because he had been a Master Stevedore drafted into the Army in the 1940's and he got to be a Major in spite of himself. He was a real gem. He wouldn't survive in today's Army because he was rotund. But he was able to do everything. He could out drink you. He could out work you and out think you in his own way in the practical things of life. He was a good guy.

The other guy, that was there, was another guy about his width and height. Joe Smith Tubbs was not the brightest guy in the world. But he would allow you to run your own place. They would give you enough leadership. But they would allow you to do things and learn from things.

We went from that kind of atmosphere when they both retired. We went to a gentleman who shall go nameless. He was a complete self-centered egotistical person whose sole goal in life was his own career, his own getting ahead in the world. It was bad that he came down. In those days, you had a barracks guard who was usually the guy that couldn't do anything else. I had a fellow with one eye out cutting the grass one day and he came down. This colonel came down and said, "Why are your cutting the grass on that side?" He said, "Because he was going to cut the grass on that side." He said, "I want the grass cut on that side." So I told him, "Mac, move over there. The colonel wants the grass cut. Cut whatever he wants." He took that as a personal afront and was not very happy with me. Fortunately, I didn't stay too long, 9 or 10 months. He didn't hurt me. But he didn't help me very much. By that, I don't mean as a professional and on proficiency reports. I mean his ability to learn and to look up to someone that he thought he could learn from. He was a bad influence in everything he touched. He stayed a Lieutenant Colonel.

Later years when I got to be a Colonel, one of my joys in life was to say "Hello" on a first name basis. Now I never felt that way about Colonel Jim Oliver who I thought was just too nice. But this other fellow just really boggled my mind as to his leadership style and his ability to do things

because we had some pretty decent people. We weren't too shabby. Russo and I thought we knew what we were doing. Between us, we'd done reasonably well on our twilight of our mediocre careers. But that's the kind of people you have to put up with. What's the applicative lesson in the whole thing? "Different strokes for different folks." You learn the bad from the bad guys and you learn the good from the good guys. You try to eliminate the bad and just practice the good. Do you succeed all the time? No, because you acquire your own bad habits; you have your own prejudices; you have your own discriminators; and you have your own weaknesses. But you try and learn as you go what you don't like and what you don't want to do.

The 461st was a great place. How did I get out of there? I was in the 461st when the Career Branch called one day and said, "How would you like to go to grad school?" I said, "I would be happy to go to school." The guy said, "You didn't even ask where." I said, "I don't care. If I'm going to go, I'll go." So I was assigned out of there to go to Syracuse University. An interesting story there is at that time, Dr. Darst was the Education Advisor of the Transportation School. He looked at my transcript which was kind of suspect. For the first 3 years, I'm one of the few people in the world to end up with an "A" average as a senior to graduate with a "C" through college because I had a lot of fun the first 3 years. But I did get an "A" average. I graduated with a "C" average. Dr. Darst was not convinced that I could make it in grad school. But by that time, I was married, had 3 kids, and had a different outlook on life. So over his objections, someone sent me to grad school. I went to Syracuse. I got there in August. It was a summer session, a full year. It was about 16 months of schooling. In those days, we sent one Transportation officer to Syracuse. There were 31 officers assigned there: one TC [Transportation Corps], 3 or 4 Infantry, couple of Artillery, and other branches and services. But I was the sole Transportation officer. I had the distinction of being the junior member of the firm because by the time that I got there, I had made Captain and had 3 kids and a pregnant wife by the time I left. But that was a unique experience. Again, it was the makeup of the people. We had banded together on the advice of the gentleman who is now the Chancellor of Syracuse University. He was our Economics professor and he said, "You guys have got a good thing going for you. You band together and you can have the economic buying power to buy your groceries, your vegetables, and everything else you're used to in commissaries. Do all these things, stay together, and you'll do well," and we did. We did very well as a group. That was class number 5 or 6. I forget the number. Since that time, it's changed in its make up. Now it's about half civilians and half military. I guess we still send TC, maybe not every year but often. The guy before me was Colonel Al Tyndall. The fellow after him was Colonel Steve Murray. They both became colonels and Syracuse was a good school.

What did I learn there? Did I learn much about Comptrollership, Accounting, or anything else? I think that any educational institution teaches you to think and apply yourself. I'm not sure you learn the "inns" and "outs" of any particular skill unless you are going to be a doctor or a specific thing. But when you take a business course, you learn general things. You learn how to apply yourself. That worked fine and it was a good sabbatical because you were on your own. Again, we had a Lieutenant Colonel up there. He was a very senior Lieutenant Colonel who later got to be a Colonel and taught Management in the Army. But he gathered us all together

one time to tell us what he was going to do and how we were going to run these things. What I allowed was that I was there as an independent student and I did whatever was good for all of us. We all allowed ourselves to do that. But as far as him telling us what to do and how to do it and when to do it, we would not embarrass him. But we were not going to be lackeys or flunkies.

The other good thing I learned up there was we had a General by the name of William O'Reader who just died recently. He was the G-4 during the Korean War. He was the guy that did all the testifying and took the hit for the ammunition shortage. The most significant thing we learned from William O'Reader was the first day we went to class (being little robots in the Army), we all had our coats and ties on and we looked pretty. We dressed up like we all had the duty uniform for civilians on. He came into the class with a plaid shirt, red socks, and sneakers. He sat and looked at us and said, "I can't teach a motley mob like this. You're too well dressed," and left. So we didn't become Bohemians. But we relaxed to take the education and not be so structured.

The other significant thing that William O'Reader taught us was common sense things. One of the biggest things that I ever got out of him was when you leave work, leave the work there. Don't take it home with you, don't carry that load with you, and don't carry a grudge. He was a unique individual. He wasn't the most learned man in the world. But from him, you learned. He was the cross-over between the university and this military group. He made that transition for us possible because most of the professors liked us because we paid attention. This was an example. This was not the Chancellor but the other econ professor. I forget his name. But his premise was when we walked in the class, "You all have "A's" in this class. Now if you don't work, you can get a "B". You need a "B" to graduate from grad school. So I hope you pay attention." He used child psychology on us. We worked harder in that class than we did in any other class. Mr. Sid Sufferin was his name. I worked harder in that class than any other class that I ever went to.

Now we had a guy that taught Statistics, who had been an E-1 or an E-2 in the Army. He hated Army officers and he tried to get in on Negroes. We gathered together and we beat him too. It wasn't a collective bargaining agreement; it was just personal pride. Professors liked us because we'd have great parties, we'd invite the people we liked, and we didn't invite the ones we didn't like. It was a very unique experience. It's different now. I've gone up there since then to talk to that class. I don't think they have the same thing. Things change and should change. But it was a very good experience. Some of the people I met there are still some of my closest friends. Two of the Artillery officers, Lin May and John Rem, became very close personal friends. But we were able to do things there and learn. The other good thing was it gave me time with my family I had not had. You went to school 15 hours a week and the rest of it was yours to figure out how to do. I could put my kids to bed, then study through the night, get up, and go do what I wanted. I could take them to the park and do whatever I wanted to. New York state was a beautiful place in the days of summer. The rest of the time it was pretty cold.

When I finished there, not knowing where I was going, I called down to the Personnel Branch and they said, "Alaska." I said, "What else you got?"

They said, "Hey, that's where you are going." I got a utilization tour out of that. From Syracuse, I went to Port of Whitter, Alaska. Whittier, which is 60 miles from Anchorage, was a one of a kind installation. It's the northern most ice-free port in the world. There were about 1800 people that lived there. They were military and civilian. My job there was just a Comptroller at the port of Whitter which was responsible for civilian pay, military pay, budgeting, and all the rest of the things. So what I got to do, right out of Syracuse, was to go right to work. I was doing what I was trained to do at a very small installation that had all of the things a big installation had on a smaller scale. So I was able to see it all happen, keep up with it, and be responsible for the whole thing. If I had been a Captain at Fort Rich, I would have had one piece of the pie and I would not have seen it all happen.

Again, I worked for 2 unique guys, one fellow by the name of Eugene M. Elliot. When I got there, he was the post Commander. His question was, "I'm going to send you down to the Comptroller School at Fort Benning for 6 weeks to learn to be a Comptroller." I said, "I just went to graduate school. I don't need to go to kindergarten and do it all over again." I found out that he was happy with the guy he had. He was an Infantry Captain who had convinced him he was the greatest thing since sliced bread. About that time, the other fellow got in trouble and I became the Comptroller overnight. I didn't go down to the six-weeks school and we succeeded very well.

A fellow was there by the name of Lieutenant Colonel Sam Flemming, who was again one of those gentlemen that came in the Army in World War II, stayed on, and became Transportation officer by default. They were not trained as Transportation officers at the time. But when they integrated in the Army, that's where they sent them. Eugene Elliot was unique in every aspect. He came from an independently wealthy family. He was eccentric. He would put radios in the taxi cabs. Now in the port of Whittier, you did not come by road and you did not come by air. You came by water or train. The train ran Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturday mornings, and back in Saturday night or Sunday night. If you missed that, you didn't get in or out. It was only 60 miles to Anchorage. But it took more than 2 hours because of the stopping and turning and twisting. So you were there by yourself in a glacier bowl. The first winter we were there, we had 57 feet (not inches) of snow. So training in Syracuse was just an amateur. The only advantage was that at Whittier, the wind blew all the time. It blew some of the snow. But you didn't go outside too much in the winter time.

Again, the mixture of people made the place work in spite of the fact that Elliot was a character. He recognized that and worked at keeping people stirred up. I think he worked at keeping people stirred up at him rather than at themselves and their traditions. We all lived in the same building. That was in a fourteen-story apartment house. He had everybody in the building move one year (the first winter) so that he could organize it better. Because we had NCOs in one side, officers in another side, and civilians in the middle. He put us on different floors. So everybody in the buildings moved. They cursed and swore and then they complained. But we didn't talk about the weather with it snowing outside. You couldn't see and it was dark all day. Everybody was so mad at him and then he would do something. He was always doing something. You could tell when he fell asleep at night. We had a closed-circuit TV. It was one of the first I'd ever seen. If he fell asleep in the middle of the movie, that's where the movie started the next night. So

you knew what time he fell asleep. You knew what his shortcomings were

In a two year period, the only compliment I ever heard from him was to my warrant officer, Mr. Charlie Stafford, and myself. He said, "If everybody else screwed up as little as you guys, it would be a good place." That was an extreme compliment from him. I'll tell you how strange he was. At that time, all the cargo and all the people heading for Alaska came through Whittier. The Army had spent some 50 million dollars building this installation. That was very expensive. But General John H. McCallis came up to be CG [Commanding General] in Alaska. He came down for his initial briefing. Being the local briefer and the local tour guide for everybody that came, Elliot had me give the briefing. At the end of the briefing, General McCallis said "The city of Anchorage has just sold bonds to build a new pier. Therefore, Whittier is going to close." I'd just spent 2 hours telling why we need to keep Whittier open, how effective it was, and how efficient it was. Elliot, without batting an eye as us, looked and said, "Captain, tell the General why we should close this place." My comment was, "Let's take a ten-minute break for coffee and a pit stop. I'll work up some new numbers." But that's the way he did it and McCallis liked him. He took him up and made him his DCSLOG [Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics]. In those days, General William C. Redling was the Chief of Staff for McCallis and so we worked at closing the Port of Whittier. We tried to give it to the state for a prison. we tried to sell it to the Hilton chain. We tried everything in the world. Later, it was bought by some of the residents there and it's still in being. It's now condos for people who want to go down and fish and hunt and do other things. But it was a unique place. What did I learn there? Again, I learned from Sam Fleming and Eugene Elliot what to do and what not to do.

There was an extremely bad snowstorm one night and I was the Duty Officer. By the time I got in, I got stuck in a D-8 Dozier. That's how bad it snowed. Eugene Elliot came to work with his fatiques on. That was the first time I'd ever seen him in fatigues. I didn't think he owned fatiques and he had his brass on backward. He had the eagle on the left side and the TC wheel on the right side. Well, lots of people had seen him and hadn't said anything to him. So being a smart alec, I said, "Hey, you've got your brass on backwards. You ought to change that Colonel." He said, "Don't you say a word. I want to go the rest of the day and see if anybody else has the balls to tell me." No one else told him. So he had a gathering that night. He gathered everybody in the place, including me. He found something to eat me about just because he didn't want to leave anybody out. Was that a lesson? Sure it was. It was a positive lesson in what not to do. But he was that kind of guy.

We had the Secretary of the Army come to visit us. Mr. Wilbur Brucker was the Secretary of the Army. We only had one club. There was no restaurant. We had one club. He (Colonel Elliot) fired the club steward the night before Brucker got there because he had fed his wife potatoes and she was on a diet. So I had to go find someone to cook the meal. He came on a Sunday morning. At Whittier, the train came in and it was a VIP [Very Important Passenger]. It went up in the yard, backed up, turned around, and turned into the station. I'm not a religious zealot. But I went to church that morning. I took my kids to Sunday school. You had to walk them across under the rope because it was blowing all the time. So when the whistle blew and I heard the train coming, I hopped up. I walked down to the train station

and there was Colonel Elliot asking me, "Where have you been?" I said, "Well, I went to Church." He said, "Don't you know the Secretary of the Army is coming?" I said, "Don't you know Christ is coming for the second time?" It shut him up and he never said another word. He got off my case. From that day forward, he was probably my best supporter and a good guy. He took the time to write to General Besson, who was then the Chief of Transportation, to tell him that I had to do great things in the Army some day. Why? Because you would stand up and let them have it when you thought you were right. Take it when you thought you were wrong.

He had a beautiful big mahogany desk and I didn't just become a big round fellow. He said, "You're getting too heavy." I weighed about 230 then. I jumped flat-footed off the floor up on the top of his desk and back down on the floor. He said, "I'm going to kill you." I said, "I just wanted to prove to you that I can still do that." He was unique. He did some strange things. But he was a good teacher in spite of everything else you learned from him. He was the first guy I saw that said, "We don't have to be structured for everything that's in maintenance in this pile of maintenance and that pile of maintenance." He said, "Maintenance needs to be maintained. Put it all together," and we did. He did some things which were forerunners to what we've done in our modern volunteer Army. Again, what did I learn from him? I learned how to think independently. There are some things that you do not do. You don't fall asleep during the TV program and have to start all over again. You don't get rollicking drunk in public. You'd get too much to drink and then you'd sit or lay down in the floor in the pub. It's hard to command respect when you do things like that. He would demand it, not command it. The difference between the 2 is as my dear old sixth grade father would tell me that you do not demand respect. You command it. You can command all you want. But if you don't earn it, you are not going to get it. It's hard for Eugene Elliot to do that. We stayed friends with him and his wife for a long while. We were more friends with his wife than with him because he was a character.

Flemming was the exact opposite. Flemming was a feisty little guy who would take on anybody. He did not think through things. But he relied totally on the staff because he was not able to think. He was interested in going hunting, fishing, and playing golf. That left you to do your own thing. But having trained well for the first 15 months under Elliot, it was easy to function under Fleming, because Elliot was up above making sure he did not screw it up. I left about the time Whittier closed, right before it closed. I left in the summer of 1960 and went back to Fort Eustis.

MAJ HUNTER: Yes. Did you take command of the 557th Heavy Truck Company?

LTG THOMPSON: Yes. I went back to Fort Eustis. Because of the inability of the Army to be flexible or make change, I appeared upon the scene 2 days after the Advanced Course started. Therefore, they couldn't allow me to start. They said, "We are going to send you to 48th Group. How do you like that?" I said, "Fine." I got there and I went to work for a guy by the name of "Hellie" Mike Reichel who later was a Brigadier General. He is still a good friend. I was assigned to the 557th Heavy Truck Company. This was another unique experience because I took over for a guy who did not trust NCOs. Unfortunately, there were only NCOs in that Company. There were no officers assigned to the Company other than me and a maintenance officer. So that was

60 in the 557th. The 557th was a heavy truck company. In those days, there were several heavy truck companies in the Army. There was only 1 at Fort Eustis. In those days, we had Strike Command. Two days after I took over, we had an alert where you were suppose to deploy. Well, I went down to Motor Pool and found out I was still signing for property. I found out that all those things that belonged on the truck were stored in boxes behind the truck. Why? Because nobody had ever bothered to break them open and put them on the truck. So we passed that thing. Because what we did, I just loaded the boxes on and went that way. We left. Could we function when we got where we were going? No. But we went. We loaded up and everybody got credit for passing the exercise. But that was not a good test. We passed the test. If I were the IG, we wouldn't pass the test because we weren't able to function at our job. So when that was over, we unloaded everything and mounted it where it was supposed to be on the truck. We found out what was excess and got rid of the excess. We found out what was short, ordered it, and got where we could function.

We took that unit off of Fort Eustis for the very first time in its history and marched it up to A.P. Hill. How do you get clearance with the state? Because they were all oversized trucks, it was a real monster, and it was a real pain in the neck. But we did that. We went up and practiced with an Armored Cavalry division that was then stationed at Fort Meade and we were able to do good things for both units. They learned how to do that. Reichel came one day and said, "You know, I want to win the best mess in the 2nd Army." I said, "Well that's simple." So we did. We won the best mess in 2nd Army. Therefore, we had the whole multitude of people that came to our mess hall for Thanksgiving dinner. But you know, all you had to do was throw down the challenge of something.

Again, I sent my First Sergeant off to get his high school GED [General Education Diploma]. I sent him quietly. I didn't send him to the Regular Class. I arranged with the Education officer to get him classes because he was started chewing the other soldier's rear ends to get the GED. I found out he didn't have one. So I made it easy for him. I sent him off. He got his GED. He could do it. It was just a question of getting the "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval." But we had a superb group of NCOs again who produced. Now we had some characters in there. I had a guy by the name of O'Reilly Moss who was then an E-5. He had been an E-7 who was working his way down. During the month on payday, Mrs. Moss would come pick up O'Reilly, take him, his money and everything else, and take him home. Three days later, she would bring him back early in the morning at the Company formation, throw him, bag, and baggage out, and say, "I never want to see that scoundrel again." He had used up all of his money. He'd been drunk for 3 days and he got it out of his system. I'd get him back for 27 days. She'd take him back for 3 days. I had the good or the bad fortune to go to his funeral and I still see his wife when I go to Fort Eustis. She's an old lady now. But Moss was a different character. Moss was the best dispatcher I've ever seen in the Army. Now he wasn't an educated man. But he knew how to do that. You had to keep him sober long enough. When he retired (in those days) it was a provision you could go back to your original grade. So we got him retired as an E-7 to protect him from himself. We got him out of the Army and we got him a job running the gas station at Fort Eustis. Until he died, he ran the gas station. He'd sit there in his rocking chair and tell lies. But it was a different group of people. After Reichel left, we got a fellow by the name of

Lieutenant Colonel Hallie Matlock who became the Group commander. General Reichel was a good first class soldier.

The Chief of Staff of the installation was a fellow by the name of Colonel Arthur W. Cornelson. In those days, you had guard. Cornelson, being an old soldier, thought that you had to be able to form a guard out within 2 minutes. If they didn't do that, then off they went to the Head of the Officer of the Guard, the Officer of the Day, and everybody else. It's like the Guards lived in constant fear. They weren't able to sleep during their 4 hours off. They had to worry about when this character was going to show up and then they would rush down to get into formation. Or he would ask his soldier, "When was the last time you fired your weapon?" So the only way to beat that is I would have to inspect the Guards before they went on guard or the First Sergeant would inspect the guards. One day, I found guys going on guard duty that hadn't fired their weapon in 6 months or a year. It was some requirement to do it every 3 months or whatever the period was. So I took them out down where the mock up area was, got the ammunition out of the supply room, and had them all discharge their weapons in the air. When they reported for guard duty, Cornelson asked them, "When did you fire your weapon?" "Today, sir." He thought that was wonderful. What had they done? They had discharged their weapons in the air. Probably, I had violated all the rules at Fort Eustis. But it met his qualification.

What's the leadership example there? It's do something smart. Don't be dumb. What's the benefit of being able to fold the guard out in 2 minutes if they're so tired at the end of the 24 hours that they can't do anything? Are they in the guardhouse? Do you have a representative number to respond to something? Yes. Have they properly qualified with their weapon? Yes. When was the last time you fired it? What difference does it make? So the other company commanders heard about that and everybody was just making sure that they fired their weapon. That's all they had to do. You didn't have to qualify. It didn't make any difference whether you did or not. Was it a good atmosphere down there? In those days, General Lane was the post Commander, a good soldier.

Cornelson was a good soldier. But he had his pet peeves. The Guard Mount was one. The Stable was built during his regime because he liked horses. I had learned how to lay brick when I was a kid. He came down one day and said, "You are going to build a stable." I said, "No. I'm a Company commander. I don't lay brick." So we had an impasse. I helped build it. But I didn't do it on duty hours. We did a lot of good things. We painted barracks. We did good and wonderful things. In those days, there were 2 battalions in the 28th Group and 2 in this 7th. It wasn't the 7th Group. It was the 4th Term. Brigadier General Jim Gun was the 4th Term Commander when Matlock was the Group Commander. We had the Cuban crisis and they sent a lot of people to Europe. Matlock left to go to the Cuban crisis. But Colonel Matlock was the kind of guy that would come down during an alert and look around, see a Kleenex or a piece of paper outside of the demptsy dumpster, and say "Pick that up." I said, "No. We picked that up during police call. I don't do police call. I didn't throw it down. I don't pick it up. The soldiers threw it down and the soldiers pick it up." So we didn't have a great rapport. Fortunately, he left and I went off to the Advanced Course.

I had the unique experience when I was there. Unbeknowest to me or

anybody else, it was the only time in my life that I came out on the promotion list below the zone of Major. There were 3890 names still on the list and I was 3888. How or why, I don't know. Because until that date, the only thing I had ever done was command companies or be the Comptroller to Port Whittier. Had I done anything else? No. Did I have a friend in court? No. If I had a friend in court, it was probably Eugene Elliot. He said, "This guy acts well under pressure." I never knew why. There were 6 TC guys on that list. Five of them were retired for different reasons before they ever had a chance to get promoted. I was the only one lucky enough to stay long enough and stay healthy enough to get promoted. But what did that do for me? I started the Advanced Course and we had a Reserve officer.

The Reserve officer was a Colonel from the Transportation unit which was assigned to the Advanced Course. Earlier I said that Matlock went to the Advanced Course during the Cuban Crisis. Matlock went to Europe. The Cuban Crisis happened while I was in the Advanced Course. Colonel Howard C. A. Gill, who started the course, was the Class commander. Well, he left when the Cuban Crisis started because his Battalion was activated and brought to Fort Eustis. So he left the Advanced Course and there were about 10 or 12 captains senior to me in there. But because of getting picked, I got promoted and became the Class commander. That was the great challenge because there were 144 officers in my Advanced Class in 2 sections. Because we had 2 section leaders, I have often said that I spent more time in the Assistant Commandant's Office as the Class commander then I did when I was the Assistant Commandant, explaining to General Edward Sawyer what these guys had done the night before. We had some real characters who did some amazing things and some strange things.

We had about 40 Allied officers who to this day many of them are still good friends. Recently, I went to Tokyo and one of them travelled 6 hours. I met him in Tokyo. Colonel Michael Katioma came all the way up from his home so we could sit. He hadn't spoken English in 20 years. But we sat there and talked about all the things we had done there in Korea, how I later became Chief of Transportation, and another fellow who became head of the Indonesian Transportation Corps. The class was not a rehash. But it was much of the same as we had had before. It was the Basic Course. There wasn't a lot new or different. You were still teaching some outdated things and doing some dumb things.

But I say that the greatest example I got out of that class was watching General Edward William Sawyer run the School. Colonel Cornelius Rinker was his deputy. There were Troth, Colonel Arthur O. Swisher, and people like this. Colonel Swisher was my Company commander in ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] summer camp when he was a Major. When I got to be a Major, he couldn't believe it; When I got to be a Colonel, he couldn't believe it; and when I got to be General, he was astounded. I say that factiously because he's been a good supporter and a good friend over the years. But watching Sawyer do things, keep things on track, learn from as close as you could get to Sawyer, and how to do things was a good experience. We had a good class in spite of some hell raisers in it.

In those days, students helped write POIs [Plans of Instructions], write lesson plans, do all those things to help them learn how to do things, and get the School out of the hole. Because it's not new that the School was

underfunded, undermanned, or under anything else. That's always going to be that way. That's where you take the hits and that's where they're going to be. So you got to figure out how to overcome that. Hey wait, what's to take this great talent resource? We had the Advanced Class and we put them to work. A man by the name of Carl Barney was the School Secretary. Carl Barney, a superb gentleman, was a Major. He got to be a Colonel. He became a very senior executive of Sealand and a good friend. But he recognized this and he convinced General Sawyer we could do it. We could make money. The T [Transportation] School was an unairconditioned and a different place. I felt as though if I would eliminate one or the other, it was either Basic or the Advanced Course. It's like they've since come down and there's a small size and a big size. But I think they are somewhere in between there where they belong. I think the Advanced Course of about 6 months is plenty. And I think the Basic Course of about 12 weeks is plenty. But we go up and down and around and around. Who's dreaming the latest itineration is how we do it. But the Advanced Course was a good course. In those days, when you finished the Advanced Course, you went off and you were something special. That was the latest gimmick.

I got shifted off in the Procurement field with about 20 or 30 other guys. We all went up to Fort Lee to the Quartermaster School to a procurement class. From there, we went over to ALMC [Army Logistics Management Center, Fort Lee] to a procurement course. We never practiced Procurement in my life, nor did many of those people who went to the Course. Some guys went off to the AMOC [Aviation Maintenance Officer Course] Course; some went off to the Stevedore Course; and some went off to a Rail Maintenance Course. But it did help in later years in other jobs I had in understanding the basic rules and laws of procurement. That was the way the course was structured in those days when you finished that whole gaggle. By then, I was a Major.

Again, because of my prior service and because I was older than the average bear, I stayed at the T [Transportation] School. When I was assigned up to T [Transportation] School, Logistics (after about 2 months of that), General Sawyer decided that he was tired of having Combat Arms guys be responsible for the training of TC [Transportation Corps] second lieutenants. So he came or he didn't come up. He called me and I went down. He said, "You are going to run the Field Training Branch." That Branch was responsible for the physical training, taking all new second lieutenants, putting them in the barracks the first couple of weeks, teaching them how soldiers live, taking them to the field, doing their physical training, and running the physical training program for the Advanced Course. It was a general soldierization trainer for the T [Transportation] School. Well, that worked fine. That was just my bag. I had 5 or 6 lieutenants that helped me and I had a couple of good sergeants that helped me and we did that. I did that for about a year.

About 7 months into that operation, I had been playing touch football. A fellow named Walter Brelling stepped on my arm and broke it. So I had surgery on it. One weekend and 6 months later, it wasn't healed. They went in again. One day, General Sawyers called me and said, "You are going to run the bookstore." I said, "You've got to be kidding me." In those days, the bookstore generated the money for the Commandant's welfare fund. The lady that ran the book store, Marie Schroeder, had gotten sick and was off getting well. For 6 months, the bookstore went beserk. It lost money for 6 months. The Commandant said, "You know you have a degree in Business. You've been in

private business. You understand how to do that. You run the bookstore." And he said, "However, you will keep your job as Chief of the Field Training Branch. The bookstore is an additional duty. It will never appear upon you efficiency report if it works." It worked. It was simple. You just marched all the second lieutenants in. You didn't let them go to the PX [Postal Exchange]. You marched them in there to buy everything and I'd get rid of all the excess merchandise. I rotated it all. Before I got caught doing it, I'd put on electronic gear, typewriters, and everything else. They made enough money to get out of the hole. Eventually, we transferred the bookstore over to the PX system, but not before we got out of the hole. And true to his word, Edward William Sawyer never did mention the Bookstore. But there are very few guys in the world who ever ran a bookstore and got out of it with a whole skin. Again, there were good people and smart people. My kids used to come over and clean the store. I'd give them 25 cents an hour to clean the place up and stock the shelves. It worked pretty well. It was a unique experience.

Why? I don't know. But after a year of doing the field training and running the bookstore (a few other things), I never did get to be on Staff and Faculty. I never graduated from the charm school. It didn't bother me too much because the last week I was there, they had an Advanced Class. In those days, we had an Associate Advanced Class. Most of it was air officers. They were kind of a bunch of rebels and they were eating up instructors. So I was detailed the last day I was there, as the movers were moving, to teach them a class on how to give a briefing and it worked. It took care of the smart alecs right off early in the game. You explained to them what they were not going to do and how they were not going to intimidate. So we got on with the class and got that over with. But it was my own experience. I used to kid with all the people in the Faculty Development Program, "You guys wouldn't certify me. I'll be back to haunt you some day." Later, I did come back to haunt them. But after that, we had a good time.

I guess the most significant guy I saw then, besides General Sawyer's comment, was Jim Moore. He was the Director of Instruction. Colonel Jim Moore was a very patient gentleman who I thought was at the elderly age of 40. He went to Jump School. Later having jumped out airplanes at age 50, I didn't think it was too old. But he was the kind of guy that you could go in and explain something. For an example, I had a second lieutenant who was a DMG [Distinguished Military Graduate], but who flunked the course. He was flunking (and you know why) because he was the DMG from one of our southern schools that just panicked when it came time to take a test. So we did some work on them and we got them recycled. But Colonel Jim Moore would accept that. He accepted the reason why you wanted to do that, work with you, and help you overcome some of those things. Again, he was a guy who allowed you to learn from your mistakes, profit from your mistakes, and do something different. You could suggest something to him and he would accept it. He would accept the change. He sent all the lieutenants up to A.P. Hill and made them all learn how to live up there. They didn't like it. I didn't like going with the field either. I don't like picnics. But you have to do that if you are going to do it right. You have to learn how to read a map. You have to learn how to live out in the field. You have to learn how to shave out of a helmet. You have to do all these wonderful things. No one wanted to do that. But we did it. Jim Moore was the kind of fellow that made sure that nobody got in your way while you got it done. I really appreciated his

support because there were an awful lot of people that didn't like him.

For example, the guy that was the head of the Field Training Branch, when I got there, was an Infantry lieutenant colonel, who never came to work the 3 months that I worked for him. He probably gave me the worse efficiency report I've ever had. It didn't bother me because I didn't work for efficiency reports. But it bothered me that this turkey never even showed up. There were nasty comments. But we overcame that too. Sawyer and Jim (Joe) Moore took good care of that. In due course, it worked. But that's the kind of mentality you see. That's why today when you go sit on a board and you look at the records of some people, you have to look at the rator and the ratee. You find out whether he's the rapor or the rapee. You see what an aberration there can be in the mind sets of some people. You look at where they have done their service, who they've worked for, what they've learned, and what they've done to contribute to the solution of that problem. I guess if there was any viable lesson out of that period of time, it was watching the difference between the Lieutenant Colonel, who didn't come to work, and Jim Moore, who came to work all the time and cared. I can still quote to you one of the comments of my efficiency report from Colonel Jim Moore. It said, "He's like the perfect in an order. He pays attention to their every needs." I thought that was a great compliment thought I was a pain in their rear end because I was always hanging around and telling them what they could and couldn't do. But Moore took that in the opposite light that I was paying attention.

Who were some of the second lieutenants then? Let's see. Brigadier General Merle Freitag was one of the second lieutenants and Brigadier General John R. Piatak was before that. But I guess Freitag is the most famous of the second lieutenants and Crouse was also. Most of them are now colonels. A whole group of guys who are now 6's. Nathaniel Ballentine was a "6". So that was a unique group of people. I couldn't tell you who the good guys were then and who the bad guys were. Some of them were exceptions. One of the better second lieutenants I ever saw was a guy by the name of Don Jacobson, who was a real all American basketball player from South Dakota State. He would have been a superb Army officer. He is a friend of General Freitag. But he wanted to go back and teach school more than he wanted to do anything else in the world. That's what he's doing. He's still teaching school today. But he was a great basketball player. In those days, we had great service teams on post. I watched Don Jacobson play Lenny Wilkins from Fort Lee. He intimidated him so much that Wilkins was afraid to even take a shot because Jacobson decked him the first time he took a shot and that was all. Jacobson dominated. He was good. But he was a good human being. He just did everything right. Those are the kind of people that makes the Army great, the kind of people you have there.

MAJ HUNTER: Did you leave there and go to Fort Leavenworth?

LTG THOMPSON: I went from there to Fort Leavenworth in August of 1963. By now, we've got 4 children: one in the 6th grade, one in the 4th grade, one in the 2nd grade, and one going to kindergarten. A year in Leavenworth was not a total sabbatical. Again, when you are off by yourself and when you are in charge of yourself, take care of yourself. You have more time with family and you have more time to do things. But I think that's the complete value of school. That's why I worry about people who overload students when they are

in school. They loose that ability to have a sabbatical because that school time is partly sabbatical, partly recreational, partly family oriented, and you are not overwhelming people with a lot of extraneous things.

MAJ HUNTER: It has been said that many of them come as geographic bachelors and they leave a family back at port.

LTG THOMPSON: They miss something when they do that. My wife has gone to a lot of strange places with me except to the Far East. She has gone every place I've gone except those 3 short tours. Wives deserve a unique place in this Army. I'll tell you about that later.

But going to Fort Leavenworth was pretty good. It was senior enough. I had enough children that I lived in a Third Infantry row. Who were my neighbors? General Tom Ayers was my next door neighbor. We were both Majors. There was Brigadier General Robert Gaskel, Brigadier General Ed Partian, and Lieutenant General Arthur Greg. So we had a reasonably good cross section of folks who twilighted a mediocre career and did pretty well. They were a very strange group of people. But what was the most significant thing in Fort Leavenworth? It was the people you meet and it was the ability to communicate with them. What do I remember at Fort Leavenworth? I remembered relatively little other than the people I know. We did very well out there. We enjoyed it. We learned from those folks and we had a pretty good time.

MAJ HUNTER: And from there?

LTG THOMPSON: Who stood out out there? I don't know. I guess the difference in life style between the Commandant, who was then General Lumley, and it's got to be four star General Harold K. Johnson, who was about as straight a guy as you'd ever want to see. Lumley was a character. But one of the best experiences I had at Fort Leavenworth was when President Truman came to address the class. My dad had become friendly with President and I got to be his aide that day. It was a unique experience for me because I not only listened to him talk, but I spent the day with him. I enjoyed the day listening to what is probably the last decisive President. In fact, he was able to make things happen.

But Fort Leavenworth was just a nice 9 or 10 months of good family living and excellent conditions. As I say (when I left Leavenworth) would I have liked to stayed on the staff and faculty? No. A lot of people flunk to stay there. I was never one that thought I ought to be there. I didn't think that my calling in life was to be an Instructor someplace. I didn't think I had that qualification. Some people do and enjoy it. I didn't. So I was up for grabs. In those days, you could go to Korea. I was due for a short tour. I had not had a short tour only because I was someplace else when short tours were being handed out. So I was told that I was going to Korea. I went back to the states, got my wife, rented a house, got the kids enrolled in school, and went back. The day that the movers were moving my stuff out, I found out I'd been transferred to 8th Army. I came back and someone had known about this for 2 or 3 months. The Captain, who should go nameless, had forgotten to tell me. So therefore, all my stuff was going to Phillie and I had a house. I had a lease I couldn't break.

MAJ HUNTER: The only trouble is you got a sponsor tour. You could bring your

family with you.

LTG THOMPSON: I could have had a sponsored tour except this guy forgot to tell me until the night before I was leaving. So I showed up and wound up in KMAG [Korean Military Advisroy Group]. I did a one year tour. Even had I accepted the two year tour, I would have had to wait 6 months to get her there because of this guy.

What's the moral of that story? If there's somebody sponsored, do your job. This turkey later was thrown out of the Army for being a bad guy and it's further proof that he's an incompetent self-centered nit-wit. But he lied to his boss because when I got there, Colonel Russ Baber said to me, "How come you didn't bring your wife?" I said, "Hey, I didn't know about it." He said, "Oh no. So and so told me that he wrote you." I said, "If he did, he wrote it to the dead letter box." Did it work out well? Sure, over a time or two.

I came up here and asked MILPERCEN [Military Personnel Center] to send me to Vietnam because there were openings. They said, "No. We can't make changes." So I went to Korea and did my year. I had the good fortune in Korea to go there and work for colonels by the name of Russ Beaver, Ben Berra, and John Curry, and a couple of good sergeants. I was the Advisor to some commanders who are now very well to do people and who have gotten out of the Army. But Korea could be a drag. You could have gotten into "Happy Hour" at the Korean Night Club. Tomorrow, it's out there someplace. You had to declare yourself early on whether you are going to be one of the "Happy Hour" boys which I'm not against drinking. I have gone to "Happy Hours" whenever I felt like going. You had to declare yourself whether you want to be a "Straight Hour" or one of the local bachelors. The group that I signed up with lived in a thirty-man hootch. There were about 18 guys out of my Leavenworth class in that hootch. So we knew how to get things done. Everbody worked in some different place. We pretty well got what we wanted out of Korea. We had a bunch of good guys. It was everybody's own choice. I had a marvelous time. I'm not against anything. We had a guy that you could hear the pitter-patter of heels down the hall in the middle of the night. We told him about it and he didn't pay attention. So we just moved him outside (lock, stock, and barrel) and put all of his clothes and all of his gear outside. He moved someplace else. We decided this was the "Monastery" and that's what it was called, "The Monastery." So we enjoyed it. We had a good time. We weren't against anything. But you made up your mind what you are going to do.

Korea was a good place. Beaver made it a good place. Again, Beaver would let me go do what I had to do with my counterparts. He knew what the role of the Advisor was. You could go over and explain what they wanted done and you had to understand what they were trying to do. They were still coming out with nothing. They were trying to gather up all the things and they were trying to be a mirror immage of the U.S. Army. Being a mirror is not always right when you have a different set of circumstances. So you had to explain to them. They wanted a DUKW company. I explained why they didn't want a DUKW company. I knew it better than anybody because I had had 2 of them. But you know, the U.S. Army had one. They wanted one. Instead, they got on to some things and they got the boat companies and some other things. But it was good. I was the Advisor to 2 or 3 people. But Beaver knew he was the Advisor

to the Chief of Transportation. When it came time to talk to him, Beaver would go talk to him.

Right about the time that we started to train the Koreans to go into Vietnam, Colonel Beaver went home. A guy by the name of Major Mike Daman came in and took his place. His thrust was, "You go tell General Lowes what he's going to do." I said, "Hey, we don't run that Army. That's his. You're his advisor. You give him advice and if he takes it, fine. If he doesn't, that's his business." Here is an example. There was a truck company assigned to the Palace Guard which was a regiment assigned to guard the Blue House. It was a truck company there. It became an obsession with this Colonel that this Company should be rotated and go someplace else. So he insisted that I go over and carry this order to General Ou Yung Wan. General Ou Yung Wan looked at that and laughed and said, "I'll take care of that today. It will be done today." So my advisor (counter-part Major Kinely Dix) said to me, "Today, we take a ride down to the Palace." They were re-stenciling all the bumpers of all the trucks. It went to the 503rd to the 504th Truck Company. They didn't move one thing. But Ou Yung Wan had solved this good Colonel's problem. That truck company had been rotated to the front to ROKA [Republic of Korea Army] Army. He said, "See I told you it would work." I had to explain to him that not one thing had happened. He still didn't believe it. He didn't go to see that himself. He was the only guy.

Was he a bad guy? No. He wasn't a bad guy. But he didn't understand the real world, and the realities of how things worked, and what your job is. You have to know what your job is, what you can and what you can't do, what you can influence and what you can't influence. We used to have a sign that said, "Between the great things we can't do and the little things we don't do, the danger is, we shall do nothing at all." He never understood that. He missed it completely. He was always out trying to give orders.

We also had a unique experience. A guy by the name of Hoska was the Chief of Staff of KMAG in Korea. Hoska was the Senior Colonel in the United States Army. He was the Class of 1937. He was a very frustated guy because he never made General. He really dwelt on the wrong things all the time. He would miss the boat. We would have an alert and then we'd worry about the frayed ends of rope on him and the truck. He would worry about the proper wearing or the fit of the uniform for everybody and whether your boots were shined. He was really into big things. But he missed the obvious. He was so busy rolling the pennies that he missed all the dollars.

Here is an example. The day Colonel Beaver left to go to the States, Jack Carey and I took him to the airport. The rules were you could not leave the compound in civilian clothes unless you were going to another military installation. Well, K-16 was a military installation. So we got up, went to church, had breakfast, and took Colonel Beaver out to the airport in civilian clothes. Well, Colonel Hoska saw us out there because he was saying goodbye to somebody in full uniform. And on Sunday night, we all belonged to the Chief KMAG in General Yancey's mess. Good old Hoska showed up every Sunday night for a steak dinner with his family. He proceeded to chew us out for being out of uniform and running around Korea in our civilian clothes. We told him (knowning what he was going to say) that we had looked up the regulation and everything. It said, "KMAG Regulation so and so says." Before 7:00 the next morning, he had the regulation changed. We were wrong. There

was a guy who didn't want to admit that he was wrong on anything, even if he was wrong. We did it very nicely. We did not go anyplace but installation to installation. But he was convinced that we were wrong and he was going to prove us wrong if he had to change the regulation. He was not a very good guy to work for. It wasn't a healthy atmosphere to work around.

General Yancy was a good guy. You know General Yancy was later retired. General Yancy and Mrs. Yancy were great people. I was the Duty Officer one night in Korea when the Chief of Staff of the Korean Army was reassigned. He resigned, retired, and became the President of a fertilizer company at 3:00 in the morning. I got a phone call from the Duty Officer of the Korean Army saying, "General Mien Ky Shek has resigned to go on to become the President of the Old Chief Fertilizer Company. This is to tell you who the new Chief of Staff is." It was the fourth in command. Well, I thought somebody was pulling my chain because my buddies would do that. So I called back and I got the Duty Officer on the phone and I said, "I want to ask you a question?" He said, "I knew you would call back. It is true. General Mien Ky Shek has retired suddenly. His health is not good." So I had to call General Yancy. General Yancy, at 4:00 in the morning, said, "If your're wrong, I'm going to have your ass tomorrow." It wasn't. General Mien Ki Shek did retire. We had a new Chief of Staff overnight. But that was their way of doing it without causing an upheaval. I still see General Mien Ky Shek when I go back to Korea. He reminded me of giving the phone call when his good friend, General Yancy, reported it. They were good folks to work with.

What's the lesson to be learned out of Korea? You can live down to a standard. You can live up to a standard. But you have to live with yourself. Again, I'm not trying to be a martyr. I've never been a peer for boys in my life. I enjoy drinking. I enjoy having a good time as much as anybody. But the other thing I learned here was that there were 4 or 5 of us that went around together all the time. We made up our minds that we were going to keep each other out of trouble. This was long before it was popular not to drink and drive. It was always one guy that did not drink when we went out someplace.

The greatest example I know of is that we had a formal dining-in one night. General John Hays and the Chief came back to the mess. So we all dressed up and we went there. About 10:00, it was over. We decided we'd go down to a Korean nightclub because they had some great band down there we were going to go hear. No women involved, none whatsoever. We went, the 4 of us. In those days, there was a curfew. We missed the curfew. We had to stay there until 5:00 the next morning. We were walking through the main gate off the MSR [Main Supply Road] at Youngsen at 5:00 in the morning when General Theodore J. Conway, the DCINC [Deputy Commander-in-Chief] of U.S. Forces Korea, was out for his morning run. He saluted smartly and he said, "Good morning gentlemen, formal reveille." He never said another word. Fourteen years later, here came a brand new BG. He was bought in at the leaders reception at the CINC REDCOM's house [Commander-in-Chief, Readiness Command]. General Conway was there and he said, "General, you certainly still look good in your blues. I haven't seen you since your formal reveille." It made a lasting impression on him. He thought it was funny. We thought it was a disaster. But again, here is a guy who understood. Here's 4 turkeys out in their blues up to no good. They're not that dumb.

I don't know whether we are giving you your leadership lesson. But I'm trying to tell you what you learn from good guys and bad guys.

MAJ HUNTER: From Korea, you go, for your first tour, in the DA [Department of the Army] staff.

LTG THOMPSON: I'm not done Korea yet. Back in Korea, we were busy training. We started to train the Koreans to go to Vietnam. That gave me the chance to go up and live up with the Koreans for about 3 months in the country to teach them guerilla tactics and convoy operations. This fellow, Kim Mien Tck, who was my counterpart, was a North Korean. He came south during the war. He spoke and read English better than I did. I swear, he could write with Korean in one hand and English in the other hand and do better than I could. In later years, he went to the T [Transportation] School and finished first in the class. He was not first among Allied officers. He was first among all officers because he applied himself so well and did so well. He later became the Managing Director of the P'Yong Yang Iron and Steel Works. It is the biggest Iron and Steel Works in the world. He is now a very successful business man and he has not changed a bit. I'll talk a little bit more about him later.

But an interesting story here is we are going up to teach the Koreans how to do combat loading of ships so that they could load the ship to go to Vietnam and load the LST [Amphibious Ship, Tank]. We had a Marine Corps counterpart, a Lieutenant Colonel, that said, "Okay. We'll be up there." He brought his calculator and everything else. Kim Mien Tck took it. I said, "How are we going to figure this out?" He said, "I have my abacus," he said, "Because we are going to use only candles. There is no electricity. So you won't be able to plug the machine in." But he said, "Don't bother to tell him. He won't listen to you anyhow." So when we got there, this Marine Colonel said, "Well, let's see." There was no place to plug it in. We were out in a mud hut. But Kim Mien Tck whipped through the whole thing. He squared the cube, pulled him down, loaded the ship, showed him how to do it, and they understood that. Again, you have to know you audience. You have to know you own capabilities and your own shortcomings before you can do these grand and glorious things. But Kim knew that.

Here is another example of how smart Kim was. One time, we rented Seoul City Stadium. They were going to have a Transportation truck rodeo. It didn't cost us much. But we did it. In the process, I bought ten-thousand ones in ten-one notes. That may have been 20 or 30 bucks. When we were going downtown, all these kids were following and I kept giving all these kids ten and twenty ones at a time. He said, "Let me tell you something," he said, "all you are doing is creating chaos and descent because you are not giving them enough to make them happy and you can't solve the problems of all the Korean people. So put your money in your pocket and tell them to get lost."

Was he cruel and hard hearted? No. He was very practical because he didn't have ten cents to rub against the other ten ones. But he was just trying to tell me that I was just causing more problems than I was solutions. He was a good guy. The only thing that I learned about the Korean troops then was that they were dedicated. Why are they so dedicated? Because above all else, they were all pure Koreans and they had great national pride. Even when they were poor and didn't have much, they would do it. People used to say,

"Do they steal things? Do they take things? Do they want things?" Yes. Because they had nothing. If you put it in the context of what they had and what they were doing, you would understood why. You would do the same thing in the same set of circumstances. Do they have that problem now? No. They are affluent now. That's not a problem. They're no different than anybody else. When you don't have, you want. You take care of your needs and they did that very well. I've been most impressed with them then. I have been ever since and I still continue to be impressed with them. They have turned themselves around to be a power in this world. It was a good part of Korea. My wife has never been to Korea. We are going to go this summer because I have a son stationed there. I'm going to go visit and see how that works so she can see the difference. She's heard so much about it and she wants to go.

After Korea, I was assigned to the Army staff back into the budget business. It came back to haunt me for a second time. I also was the Budget Advisor in Korea. So I must say it's the third time I got a hold of the pot. I've paid back for my one year of grad school. I went to the DA staff and worked the Army Budget Staff. You become an instant expert when you go there because I came back from Korea in August. In September, I went to work. I was sitting at work one Saturday morning because my wife was still in Philadelphia waiting for me to find a house I could afford to buy. I was waiting for the mortgage to close. I was reading through stock fund material because I was going to become the stock fund expert. A guy came in and sat on the edge of my desk and said, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm trying to find out what's going on here." He said, "What do you know about stock funds?" I said, "I know very little." He said, "Come on with me. We're going down to see the Chief." I found out this was General Hackett. He was the Comptroller of the Army with a stock fund question between the Chief of Staff and General Frank S. Besson, Jr. and some of the officers. I became the expert. I had been there about one week. I went down to explain to the Chief of Staff of the Army how the stock fund worked. Fortunately, I had learned enough in a week to keep out of trouble and I learned a valuable lesson. You don't go in and leave your door open on Saturday or you will get trapped. Most people worked on Saturdays anyhow. Then within a week, I was overseas again as a stock buying expert. I went to Europe as the stock buying expert or something. You became the instant expert. What was the good thing I learned about there? I guess this was the catch thrown on how to work with civilians because of most of the people I worked with were civilians. Some were excellent; some were average; and some were less than good.

There was a fellow by the name of Stan Willis. He was a GS-16. There wasn't many 16s in those days. We had major problem with funding the stock fund in the Far East for the Vietnamese War. I said, "Well, I'll write a letter." He took me in his office; he sat me down; and he gave me a half hour lecture on how to get things done. He said, "We don't have time to write a letter. You call." I said, "It's expensive." He said, "You can't afford not to. You have a 4 billion dollar program. We can afford a 20 dollar phone call." He laid out for me how to do things. I did it and I did them. But Stan Willis was the kind of a gentleman who understood that he had somebody that didn't know what to do and he did it.

The other thing that impressed me was the first time I ever (the first 10 days two weeks I was there) got a yellow tail. A yellow tail in the Pentagon, in those days, was a tasking from the Office of the Chief of Staff to supply

an answer. So I picked this up from the exec and I talked to the Army Buddy's Office. I went by to get a cup of coffee in the corner lounge up there. I was standing and looking at this and wandered "What do I do with this?" A Lieutenant Colonel looked at me and said, "What's the matter? You look like you are lost." I said, "I am. I don't know." He said, "I signed that. What they want you to do is....." And he told me how to do a yellow tail. He told me how to get that done. That was Homer D. Smith who later was the Major General at the LOG [Logistics] Center. He went to Alaska out of Vietnam. He has just retired from NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] LOG [Logistics] in Europe.

But again, he was a guy who had the time to share with someone when they thought they needed help. He didn't even know me and I didn't know him. But he saw me standing there looking at this piece of paper with the dumb look on my face. He came over and said, "Hey, you look like you're lost. What's the matter?" I explained to him and he explained to me how to do it. He accepted the piece of paper and he got it done.

I say that there were some people who had the dedication to help you do things. Then there were other people who were eight to fivers. You got 4 of 5 people that say, "I've got to take off to vote today. I have to leave early." I had one civilian who found more reasons to leave than to stay. The day he pulled that one on me that he had to leave early to vote, I explained to him that I thought you had to be literate before you could vote. You had to pass the literacy test. He filed a complaint that I was picking on him. He was pretty dumb, anyhow. He's retired now. He retired long before I did.

The Directorate of Army Budget in those days was a very busy place because we were building up for the Vietnam War. I wound up with a 4 billion dollar budget. I was trying to keep money in. I was trying to keep everything funded including the Stock Fund and the Industrial Fund.

The best thing I can say about that whole tour was a fellow by the name of Mel Richmond who was my boss. Benjamin Franklin Taylor was a director of the Army budget. Then another Taylor was the director after him. You had to learn how to get around the building. This is an example that someone told me, "If you want to get by Ben Franklin Taylor, misspell a word in the first paragraph. He'll circle that; he won't read anything else; and he'll let you send it." So I did. I misspelled a word; he put a big blue circle on it. He said, "Now straighten that out and bring it back." I straightened it out and I brought it back. He checked that word and he signed it. He'd never read anything else. It's a true story. You couldn't believe that anybody could be that easy to do in. But we were able to do that.

We had some good first class people. But again, I formed an office that was like the 606th experience. People were given their choices. They wanted to send up to the budget because it was building up, and building up, and building up. I didn't get exactly the first round draft choices. I got some other wholesale answers. But I had the good fortune to have 3 other spaces. I hired a fellow from Honduras by the name of John Alemeda. He spoke very precise English because he was from Honduras. He had been in this country for two years. I hired him as a GS-12. I hired a young gal fresh out of college as an intern and I hired a black fellow by the name of Alexis Hoover, which was unheard of. We are talking about 1964 when we still didn't do that. We

still didn't hire anybody that was less than 50 years old and a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant. So I had a Hispanic, a white female, and a black guy. The black guy had worked his way out of the cotton fields through the Warrant School. They were the strength of that organization because they knew they were in the spotlight. I hired another gal by the name of Joan Burroughs, who had been a professional clerk. She worked her way through business school. The 4 of them offset these other guys. They did books on 3 of the 4. Three of the other guys retired. They went someplace else. We won't name them. But they were some bad guys. The good people really made that place work. When you are going to have four billions bucks worth and trying to keep up with it for 7 people, you got your work cut out. We gave each of them an area and it was a good experience. So I spent three years doing nothing. I spent a lot of time on the road. I worked at budgets, stock funds, and industrial funds, getting money, and testifying as the back up guy before Congress.

I went before Congress, one time, with a General Beck who challenged one of the congressmen. The congressman was a CPA [Certified Public Accountant]. I said, "Don't do that." He said, "He knows more about by far than anyone of us." But he wanted it to look good on paper. The congressman, recognizing that, stuck it right in his ear. Everytime he'd say, "Yes," the answer should have been, "no." Everytime he'd say, "No," the answer should have been, "Yes." It took us 3 weeks to straighten out the Congressional Record with his questions. He never did understand how he'd been had or why he'd been had. But the congressman was done. He came over and said, "Son, you did a good job trying to keep your boss out of trouble. But he's too much of a horse's rear end. Good luck." That's the kind of people you run into. Again, what do you learn? You learn from people who will not listen. They are so busy trying to look good, trying to get it all done, and trying to make sure that they're the central focus. They're the star. He didn't do too well. In fact, he left there. He went off to some insignificant job and then he retired. He was a nice guy personally. But professionally, he was not the right kind of guy. He never did really get off the ground.

The significant learning curve in the Pentagon was the door to the Vietnam War. General Johnson appointed General Oren E. Herberth to be his Special Assistant for Southeast Asia. General Herberth went on several tours to Southeast Asia to find out how the logistics flow was going, how repair parts were working, and the general Command atmosphere. He assembled a team of folks that went with him. I had the good fortune to make several trips with him as his budget finance guy.

I guess the first trip we took, it was around Easter of'67. It was probably '67 or '68. I don't know which year. It was either one of the two. But we went first to Hawaii because we were in Hawaii on good Friday. I remembered that we went at noon. He said, "What are you going to do for this afternoon?" I said, "Well, General Herberth, I'm going to go to church. I'm going to need all the help I can get." So we went in and we sat down. Out came a chaplain who I had run into in Alaska. He was the worse chaplain that I have ever experienced in my life. I said, "If you will excuse me, I've got to leave because this guy is so bad. I don't want to listen to this turkey." So he got up with me. If you ever saw an impression on somebody in your life, it was was when a Major General gets up out of the middle of the congregation on Good Friday and walks out. It didn't make any impression on the chaplain. He was so dumb. He was lonesome anyhow. He didn't believe in what was right.

But General Herberth was a good guy.

We went to Okinawa on Easter Sunday. We spent all day Easter Sunday finding out what was wrong with the supply system and what people problems were located there. General Charles T. Horner was the Commanding General. In later years, Charles T. Horner, III, was one of my action officers in the IG [Inspector General] Office. So I lived the full life cycle. We spent the whole day. The next morning, we had a meeting in General Horner's quarters. General Herberth, General Horner, and I wound up as the recorders. That was when I listened to one Major General give guidance to another Major General as a result of being a special Emissary of the Chief of Staff. It was a learning experience. That's when a lot of reassignments happened. It happened right after that because there were many problems in Okinawa. The supplies were not flowing and the surpluses were building up. There were all kinds of problems. Part of it was attributed to people who were doing business as usual and part of it was a lack of expertise in some fields. So I would say there were 40 or 50 transfers that occurred as a result of that morning session. So it was a great learning experience for me to watch how things really happen and to watch General Herberth, who was a very quick study in getting to the bottom of the problem.

We went from there to Vietnam. We toured Da Nang, Pleiku, and all these other great places. Then we came back through Hawaii. We were going to write a trip report. Everybody had a piece of the trip report. Well, the guys that were writing the part of the trip report on what was wrong with the leadership didn't do a very good job. We got our part done. I remembered that Russ Grogan and myself were sitting down by the pool in Hawaii waiting for everybody else to get done. Everybody was drinking martinis and having a good time. General Herberth came down and said, "You guys come here. You are going to write the part on leadership and what's wrong with the Command structure." We said, "Hey, we didn't do that. That wasn't our job." He said, "I didn't ask you what your job was. I want it by tomorrow morning." So we quit drinking martinis; we quit sitting by the pool; and we went to work. We spent the whole night putting together what was that piece of the report which he accepted. But it was a question of what he had faith in. He said, "You guys are young guys. You can figure out what's wrong anyhow." We were both lieutenant colonels and we put together what he accepted. We put his own flair and flavor to it. We accomplished the report.

So from there, I made a couple of more trips. I went back out with him. I again watched closely how senior executives handle themselves and how to learn from good leadership, which he was good at. He had fun. I'm inclined to think, in today's Army, we don't have as much fun as we used to have. We have a fear of having fun for fear of doing something wrong for the wrong reason. We don't have as much fun.

But Herberth had fun. We were on an airplane going out to Hawaii and there weren't 30 people in the back end of this plane. He had just been in a serious accident and we all ordered a drink. He couldn't open the little bottle. He said, "Would you open this?" I said, "If you can't open it, you can't drink it." And everybody was saying, "Yes sir and no sir." At that, he was so quick that the stewardess said to one of us, "Who is that guy?" He looked up and he said, "I'm the new President of the United Airlines." We didn't know that they had a new president. But he had read it in a magazine.

When he got on the plane, I didn't know whether he looked like it or not. But the next thing I know, the Captain was walking by to look and to see who this guy was because everybody was bowing and scraping to him. But he was a quick study on how to keep things moving. They came over and asked him again, "Who is he?" He said, "Well, I'm really trying to get a religious crusade and this is my band. This is my orchestrator, Mike Corret." They all took a liking to him. What they did was just send over bottles of champagne so they wouldn't have to bother with us and we wouldn't bother with them. But he was just a good guy who knew how to have fun. But when it was time to go to work, you better be ready to go to work. If it was 4:00 in the morning or 3:00 in the morning, it didn't make any difference. When it was time to have fun, he did it. To this day, he has remained a good friend. He was such a good friend that he was going out to be the G-4 in Hawaii. He said, I'm going to take you with me and make you my Transportation guy." But then he said, "No. You need to go to Vietnam. You don't need to come with me because I'm in the twilight of my career. I can't help you one bit. You go to Vietnam." He arranged for me to go to Vietnam.

One boss was saying, "You're staying here. The stockpile stays straight." The other guy was saying, "You're going." Herberth, having been the Special Emissary of the Chief of Staff, won that battle easily. I went to Vietnam. I went there to wait to get a battalion. I didn't wait long because 5 or 6 days later, I had a battalion. But the unique thing about the Pentagon was learning how to get things done, how to write a paper, and how to coordinate things. And you get disagreed with something. A good friend by the name of Sullivan worked in DCSLOG [Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics]. He and I wrote the nonconcurrence, the reconsideration of nonconcurrence, and the whole 9 yards. We could help each other write our piece of the paper. We didn't give it to each other. But we knew what words had to go in there. We would help each other do that. But you get on with doing things. You knew who the good guys were, who the bad guys were, and who the good Action Officers were. They were people that you knew cared. You'd take their paper and you'd get a check on it. You knew those who were really bad guys and you thought that they were trying to be super stars. You'd put it in the bottom of the pile and wait. You knew you had to go along to get along. I don't mean there was any overt action. But there were some people that you knew were just self-serving. So you didn't help them as much as you did the people you knew were trying to serve the Army. That's how things got done and it worked very well.

Well, who were the guys? Corey Wright was later a BG [Brigadier General]. He was later a Major General. Rosco Cartwright, who was later a Brigadier General, was killed in an air crash. BG Jim Gunn was a DC [Deputy Commandant] guy. Who else? It was a pretty good flavoring of people that made out well. They were all Majors and Lieutenant Colonels that were working, doing their job, and getting things done. It was not too bad. It was the same as my Advanced Course. Out of the Advanced Course came Hesson, Drenz, and myself. So we got three generals out of one Advanced Course. It wasn't too shabby.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay sir. Moving on to your command in Vietnam, it's the last thing I want to cover.

LTG THOMPSON: As I mentioned, what were the lessons learned? What was

valuable out of the DA [Department of the Army] Comptroller Store? It was how to work with other action officers in the building, how to get things done, how to run a paper, and how to make sure that you got your thoughts in the paper. But you put the Army's best interest first. You learned how you could work and interact with civilians, both the good and the bad. There were some of them who were professionals. They were willing to work the same long hard hours and put the same time and involvement in it that you did. There were others who were there just to fill in their day. If you took the best of both worlds, you could come up with a very valuable learning experience. Because you must remember, as you go through your route in this Army, that there are about 481 or 490 thousand civilians that you are going to work with all the time. The further along you go and the more you get away from direct TO&E [Table of Organization and Equipment] units, the more you are going to be directly involved with the civilian work force that can make or break you. Now I guess that was the biggest experience, other than again, the kind of learning process as you watch the senior executives such as General Herberth, General Sacton, General Lou Manis, and later to be General Jim Gunn, do their magic act and learn.

The other thing was one of the first times I was ever given a piece of advice. Don't always work for your TC [Transportation Corps] buddies. Go work for some other Combat Arms guy or some other branch so that more people get to know you. You know more things other than your basic branch which has held me in good stead ever since. I recommend it highly for everybody. I used to be a jack-of-one trade, but a master of several if you are going to succeed.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay sir. From that assignment, you went to Vietnam and you took over the 11th Trans Battalion. Where was that located sir?

LTG THOMPSON: The 11th Trans in those days was at Cat Lai, in Vietnam, which was about 15 miles outside of Saigon on the way to Long Binh on the Song Cai River. Its mission at the headquarters was the in stream discharge of ammunition. It had several other missions. It was the aberration, maintenance, and support of all the floating craft in Vietnam. It had the terminal transfer operation at Long Binh. It had the operation at Cat Lai. It ran all of the floating craft throughout all of Vietnam as well as the maintenance. So it was scattered over Hell's Half Acre. The chances of you ever seeing the whole Battalion assembled in one place was seldom or never.

MAJ HUNTER: What were your subordinate units that you had? Did you have 2 terminal battalions and 1 truck battalion or what?

LTG THOMPSON: No. This was the Battalion.

MAJ HUNTER: I meant Company.

LTG THOMPSON: There were 2 terminal companies, 2 boat battalions, a maintenance outfit, and I'd have to dig out the other outfit. You can figure it up. But there were 2 terminal battalions, 2 terminal companies, a terminal transfer company, 2 boat companies, plus a floating craft company (which was the tankers and the J Boats and the Q Boats and all those other larger floating craft), plus the floating cranes.

I had a lot of contract maintenance. I had a lot of joint ventures with Vietnamese and Korean stevedores to do operations as well as our own people. We were isolated by oursleves. We closed the place down every night at 6:00 and opened it up 6:00 the next morning. We circled the wagons and we had the Vietnamese Ranger Battalion as our outside guard. Then we had our own folks inside perimeter and we did our own walking guard. We were totally self sufficient. We were seldom visited by anyone, except by air, because the road was not our road. You know, once in a while you would be reminded of that. I had several bosses who would not come anyway except by boat. Since I owned the boat, that made it easy to know when your boss was going to come to call. It was an easy place to start with because of my predecessor.

The night I reported for duty down there, I said, "Let's go to the mess hall and eat." He told me that it was so bad that he didn't eat there. He ate in his room. He got a case of steaks off the ship. So I decided that we'd go over to the mess hall and see how bad it was. He was right. It was pretty bad. But the next day, we changed that and it became the best mess hall. Again, I had a fetish for mess halls. It got so good that General [Rolland V.] Heiser, who was then the first LOG [Logistics] Command Commander, came down for lunch one day. He said as he always did, "Brother, can I come here for Thanksgiving dinner?" He did come because it was, without question, the best. It fed 4 meals a day because we worked around the clock. My wife kidded me about it. I love soup for breakfast. We had soup for breakfast, lunch, and supper because people worked different shifts. We did a good job feeding 1200 people. They stopped by just to eat there. We owe that to our soldiers.

We also were living in tents (and some other things) and we owned all the tonnage in Vietnam. So we got into the construction program. We got soldiers out of the muck and the mire. One of my good commanders told me that I shouldn't be doing that. I didn't have time to be doing that. So I just ignored that and we did it anyhow. Soldiers did that in their off duty hours. It kept them from getting into other kinds of trouble and made it very easy to enhance the morale of the whole organization.

I had 4 different trans commands. There were 4 different commanders when I was there. One left shortly after I got there. He was a nervous fellow who never did understand really what soldiers did and why they did it. But he would come down and he would immediately look for scattered coke cans. I used to tell the Sergeant Major to throw some cans near the dock. He'll see that, get excited, and we'll pick them up. He'll then leave happy or he'd go to the mess hall and tell me that we're having baked potatoes instead of mashed potatoes. Why? I'd say, "Probably because we got them off the ship and it was a trade for something else and it's better than dehydrated stuff. I didn't change the cook's worksheet. So he'll get exotic. He's one of those guys that's threatened me with efficiency reports. It never seemed to bother me too much because he downgraded me for not seeking additional education while I was in the middle of the Vietnamese War. He also found that we were counting ammunition at 1 ton when it came out of the hole, 1 ton when it went on the barge, and 1 ton when it come off onto the dock up at Long Binh. That was 3 tons. I'm not too smart. But I knew that was 1 ton you could shoot out of the end of the gun. So instead of doing 33 hundred tons a day, he wanted to improve the amount of tonnage moved because all the ships were Qed in Bong Tau. I was told to solve that problem. So what we did was go on a little

better work schedule, a little bigger threat to the contractors and a little more motivation for our working people. Immediately, we went up to 1500 tons the first day. He said that I had cut the tonnage in more than half and I told him that I increased it.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay sir. You were talking about your tonnage being reduced and you said that it had been increased.

LTG THOMPSON: My tonnage was reduced. But I told him that we counted by one's and not three's. Pretty soon, we solved that problem. We got on, we reduced the number of ships laying at anchor, we solved the problem, and people did a better job.

How did we get on with doing it? I had another Group commander who showed up. We had a big problem because we were using electric forklifts and they were floating around in the harbor. Somebody had convinced us that the best thing to do was to put it on the barge and put the soldiers out there. They lived like animals. They were shacking up. They were doing all kinds of great things. So I moved them to dry land. We moved the batteries out there and that was a big problem. Then we found out we could take the batteries apart, take the dead cells, put them back together, and make them work. So we solved the battery problem. Again, that was because the smart NCOs [Non-Commissioned Officers] and some smart young lieutenants decided how they could do that.

I guess most surprising to me in taking over a battalion was that I was told all these years that everybody was in Vietnam. But I found out that I had one Major, one Captain, one Chaplain who was a Captain, and a doctor. So I had two Captains, one Major, and myself. I don't know where all these senior officers were. They were someplace else. They weren't in that Battalion. But that worked out fine because I had the right mix of people who were willing to do what had to be done.

Again, no amount of planning replaces pure Irish luck. I replaced my exec right after I got there because this guy rotated. Inherently, there was one Major by the name of Douglas Hay Daily. In my opinion, he was the most competitent, intelligent, best organized Field Grade Transportation Corps Officer I've ever seen. Why he's not a general officer, it beats me. He's far superior to many who've made it, myself included. He made my life bearable. He did all the things at home, so that I could go keep up with this gaggle of folks as they wandered around the country.

I also had a first class chaplain by the name of Vaughn Niblet who understood troops. Now there are chaplains and preachers. He combined the best of both. But he could relate to this soldier. He could go drink a beer with this soldier. He would go play basketball with them and they would trust him when they had problems. I also had a very first class doctor by the name of Wallace. Captain Wallace was a nephew of George Wallace. Aside from that, many black soldiers thought he was the greatest things around because he took good care of everyone. So again it was a small group of people who made thing grow and flourish.

You had to be because you lived together. You circled the wagons every night and you didn't go anywhere but right there. That can be very dangerous

man

I guess the other thing that was fun about Cat Lai is that all the great USO [United Service Organization] shows would come visit you. But Carol Walsh came down one night and was forced to stay overnight. I had to put armed guards outside my room where she stayed and I kept everybody outside, including me. We had Joey Bishop come to visit. Since he was a native of South Philadelphia as I was, I had all kinds of signs. We were amazed as anyone would be from South Philadelphia.

We had some good soldiers and we had some bad soldiers. As I said, one of the reasons I knew it was a dumping ground was because when they had trouble in the Long Binh jail, they took 42 soldiers out of the jail. They trucked them down to Cat Lai to get rid of them because the jail was overcrowded. I had a very smart exec and I had a very smart Sergeant Major. We decided the only way to solve this problem was not to put them all in the same place, but to break them up. We put them each on a different vessel and we sent them off in different ways around Vietnam. They all complained that they were not Seamen, they were not Oilers, they were not something else. I told them the were all going to learn OJT [On-the-Job Training]. We put the worse offender on a vessel, the big vessel we had with Mr. Mack Beasely. He was probably the biggest, meanest, toughest Warrant Officer the Army has ever known. I had served with him in Alaska. He truly had a size nineteen-and-a-half neck. He was tatooed from head to toe. He explained to this young man that he wasn't nearly as tough as Mr. Beasely and not to misbehave. Allegedly, he threw him over the side of the ship one day and the guy couldn't swim. He dragged him out of the water and he made a real believer out of him. The moral of the story is that 35 of those 42 soldiers made it in the Army to discharge. The other 7 were hopeless and they were eliminated. They went back to jail and out. Was that great leadership? No. It was just a smart guess on somebody's part. It was better to split them up, cycle them someplace else, and give them a chance to perform (those that wanted to). If they did, fine.

The other unique thing about that Battalion was the number of Warrants. I owned most of the Marine warrants in the world at that time. They are kind of prima-donnas. You have to play them differently, treat them differently, and some of them you have to discipline differently. But it worked because of having Mr. Beasely on my side from years gone by. He, being the Senior Warrant in the world, was able to translate anything I wanted done to the rest of the Warrants. They would behave very well and Mr. Beasely was in charge.

From there, from Cat Lai, I was succeeded by Colonel Bob Beltow, a very fine gentleman who took over that Battalion. [Col] Doug Daily stayed there with them; the Chaplain stayed with them. They got a new doctor. They went up to Da Nang to work for General Jim Gunn, Assistant Director of Transportation.

Again, this is another one of those places where we were the tenants with the Navy. The problem was there was a big backlog of broken equipment, misused equipment, surplus equipment, excess ammunition, and another backlog of things that had to be fixed. So my job as the Director of Transportation was to get that started, get it organized, and get it moving. I got a few people. Usually, most of your soldiers were retreads from your divisions when

they couldn't make it there. So they had a profile and so they shipped them back to you to do the job. So we inherited a lot of people. But again, we wanted a chance. We put them to work and we solved that problem.

The Vietnamese helped solve a piece of it because they blew up the ammunition dump when I was the Duty Officer. Two-hundred and some thousand tons of ammunition blew up in 2 days. They blew up the bridge ramp which was piled high with the equipment. They had a time policing that acted up. But there were repeated things of that nature. We organized the convoys over the Hy Bahn Pass where they had not been going to successfully before and we managed to do that. We also got the railroad train running back over the Hy Bahn up by Phu My. The very first train that ran out in a clear field, ran into one of our tank trucks carrying petroleum. The train saw him. He saw the train. I guess they didn't believe each other and they ran into each other in the wide open field. General Heiser wasn't too happy with my career success story on that.

In North Vietnam, since we were tenants with the Marines and the Navy, and doing support at a sector and doing things differently, it was kind of challenging because we were not the prime corners of real estate or anything else. You had to negoiate your way around the battlefield up there to get things done. It worked very well.

MAJ HUNTER: Were you there during TET [Troop Evaluation Test] offensive?

LTG THOMPSON: I got there right after TET. I lucked out. I had been there a year before during TET. I had a couple of TDY [Temporary Duty] trips there that never accounted for a tour. But it accounted for long time trips, both with (I was going to say), General Phling Fy, General Herberth, and some other tours. The budget guy was funding repair parts so he could get back and testify before Congress what was right and what was wrong. But the tour up there was one of trying to keep the few folks we had up there supplied and to work as an interface between the Navy and the Marines. That was Gunn's job. It was to keep that all the way from the DMZ [Demilitarized Zone] where we had lots of Artillery units and we had 26 support groups. At that time, General [Vincent M.] Russo was a Colonel who had a battalion up around Phu My. Then John Goth had the Battalion up around Phu My. John Goth was a very first class guy. General Jim Gunn was the kind of guy, when Russo was leaving, that said to me, "Hey, there's a guy that wants a battalion. Is he a good guy?" All I did was say, "Yes." That was enough. There was no question. If he felt that if you said, "Yes", that was good enough. That was the kind of fellow to work for.

At that time Eugene R. Lanzillo, who later became the BG [Brigadier General], was the SPO [Surplus Property Officer] in that area. Gunn was there. I must say, again, that General Gunn allowed me to be the Transportation officer. The first week or so, there was some question that people were trying to get into my business. But we established that there was only one Transportation officer. There was a SPO, there was a CG [Commanding General], and there was a Transportation officer. I was that one that all Transportation decisions would come my way subject to the CG's approval. But he didn't overrule me as a Transportation officer. It makes a big difference when you have that kind of support. That worked pretty well for a while. Then we kind of left there happy and we had solved part of the bedlam of

things. We had gotten rid of some surplus

The thing that helped do that is that the Chinese, Taiwanese, Philippinos, and other people came in and bought a lot of surplus. We wrote the contract so that they hauled it and they had a deadline to get it out of there. So that helped us solve our problem by putting the monkey on their back. It really worked pretty well. But it was a fun place. There was a curfew up there. You never went anywhere. If you did, you went ready to be blown out of the saddle. It was a different kind of environment.

MAJ HUNTER: Did you loose many men, sir?

LTG THOMPSON: In Cat Lai, yes. I guess the most tragic thing I saw happen at Cat Lai was I was standing on the pier one day in the Harbormaster's Office. We were ready to make a tow of ammunition barges up the river to Long Binh. A warrant officer, who was the Master of the vessel, said, "I've got a tooth ache." The other Warrant Officer, Mr. Galamore, said, "Oh, I'll take your place. I've got a license for that vessel." He got on the vessel and they headed up the river. They got around the place we call VC [Viet Cong, Vietnamese Communist] Island in which everything that was bad was VC. A rocket come into the wheelhouse of that ship and took the back of Mr. Galamore's head off within a half hour after he volunteered to do it. It's kind of tragic. I guess you believe what's going to happen is going to happen. But that was the most tragic example I've seen. I still hear from Mrs. Galamore once a year. But it was kind of a sad thing. The other warrant officer, I think, suffered as much as anybody else because he felt like that was his fault. We tried to solve that problem by just spraying machine gun fire up there. But I was told I couldn't do that. So we did selective marksmanship. But we didn't have anymore incidents like this. We lost a couple of people other ways down there. But most of it was primitive patrols or falling off ships or injuring themselves. There were very few combat casualities because we were kind of isolated. We did have several fire fights where they tried to overrun us. Oftentimes, they would try and drop a rocket in one of those ammunition ships. When asked what would happen when that happened, I said, "We would straighten out the river and have the biggest, widest river you've ever seen because there were 3 ships out there all the time plus 20 or 30 barges hanging on bouys ready to move. But you couldn't worry about that. You can only die once. What is the difference?

There were good soldiers. Were there some bad soldiers? Yes. There were some of the worse soldiers that I've ever seen. I had a soldier that I put in jail. The next thing I know I'm riding down through Saigon going to FORTRAINS [Force Training] Headquarters and my driver said, "There's your favorite guy walking down Tou Do Street. He'd been transferred to jail in Hawaii. Since he was smoking pot and doing other things in Vietnam, he got back to Vietnam. But he wasn't coming back to the Battalion. He was downtown living. So I got out, locked him up again, and put him back in jail. There was a tremendous athelete who was a bad guy, who was a bad soldier, and he got hooked on pot. People blame everything on ... I must have missed something in Vietnam because I have not had any severe trauma since I came back. I guess I'm sure I'm not belittling anybody at that. But I'm fortunate. Most of the people that I've been associated with since then, that have served with me there, have not experienced that problem. I had another guy who was really a bad guy. I guess it was a classic. He went through the chow line one day.

He mouthed off to one of the cooks and he had some bad comment to him. The cook put his serving spoon down and bloused his eye as well as I've ever seen. The guy got the knock out punch with 3 or 4 hundred watching. No one saw a thing. I couldn't get a witness to court martial the cook because all I saw was the guy stumbling. So I couldn't dispute that. So we just let it go like that. But there were some bad guys. People said, "Aw, you know, just keep them down there." Well, I lived with them all the time. I lived in the center of that compound all by my little body self.

We had a good thing. We built a movie theater. We had a swimming pool down there that had not been used. We fixed it up, put water in it, and that was our fire reservior. Instead, my soldiers could go swimming. They couldn't go in the river. But they could go in the swimming pool. We figured out how to fix the filters. We got some things off the ships that we needed. We did a little bargaining and we made it work. In Da Nang, you could bargain for anything because the Navy had one of everything.

But Vietnam was a unique experience. What was the biggest challenge over there? You get complaints from people. We had vanilla ice cream yesterday? Why don't we have some different flavor? There were some strange things that happened over there. The other unique thing was that I owned the mortuary. It was a very, very strange thing trying to control that place and keep the standards because we had all civilian morticians and a very, very grisly business as you can well imagine. I guess one of the biggest shocks of my life is that I got a call one night that said, "Meet the helicopter coming in from the 101st. Pick up the guy. His mother is dying. You got to get him on a 141 and get him out of the country. He's a Brigadier General. I said, "Okay." So I went to the helicopter and met him. I said, "Hi, Al, how are you?" I found out that Al was a general by the name of Allen Burnette who is now dead. He was the same guy who I used to take the collection up with in the church back in Falls Church, Virginia. But I didn't know he was in the Army and he didn't know I was in the Army. Little did I know he was a BG [Brigadier General]. But he got to be a Lieutenant General, very fine gentleman. What's the moral of the story? We got him on an airplane. We would have done that for Private Joe Snooker. But I was utterly amazed to see this guy that I had been around for a couple of years. I found out who he was, a good guy.

I left Vietnam. I left happy, came home, and I had to get acquainted with my then two year old son and other children. I was assigned to JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff]. I walked into the building and I was detailed immediately out to a study over in the Rosalyn and Pomponio Building. I worked for an Air Force O-6 who shall go nameless. His claim to fame was that he dressed pretty, he played golf well, and he came to work maybe once a week. I wound up as the Deputy as an O-5 over there, a senior O-5. I had a good group: a mixed bag of Navy, Coast Guard, Marines, Army, and a civilian contractor. He was a retired Brigadier General who used to try to give me guidance. He was a good guy. But he didn't know that this was a study of Transportation and ship loading. I had spent most of my natural life doing that. So that's how I got on the study to begin with. We were documenting the obvious and it was a waste of money. This guy never showed up. One day, we went over to brief the J-4 who then was General Timothy J. O'Keefe. My boss came in and got the stuff together. We gave the briefing. He started to give the briefing when O'Keefe said, "You don't know what you are talking

about." He asked me a question and I gave him the answer. He said, "You sit down and you give me the briefing." Well, that didn't do me in good standing with my boss because I had not said a word. I didn't when I found out that his boss, a Brigadier General in the Air Force by the name of Tom Kennedy, was wise to this guy not coming to work. He set him up to knock his brains out. I was the innocent bystander that was swinging the hammer. But Kennedy made sure I didn't get hurt. Morris didn't hurt me. Morris would have liked to. But he knew that I didn't do it. I did nothing. They were tired of calling. Morris wasn't there; he'd be right back. That was a year before I got there and the year that I was there. So Morris didn't get fired. He was replaced. When I got promoted to Colonel, Tom Kennedy did it. Tom Kennedy was about 6'7". He was the biggest guy in the Air Force. He looked down and he said, "Sonny, this is the first time in your life somebody bigger than you is going to promote you. So enjoy it."

What did I learn in JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff]? I learned that I didn't want to work up there. I heard all of this about you have to be the cream of the crop, and you have to be Joint, and you have to do this, and you have to do that. Well, in those days, you had to pass the screen before they would assign you to JCS. You had to be a Leavenworth graduate, you had to be an ex-Battalion Commander, and you had to do all these other things. So I don't see where there is a great deal of difference. The big difference I see is wanting to keep you there forever. You can't do that and do all the things the Army wants you to do and do it properly. There's not enough time to do all of that. So I got there for a year. At the end of the year, I was lucky. During the year I was there, I was selected for 0-6. I got promoted. I got selected for ICAF [Industrial College of the Armed Forces] and I went to ICAF. So after a year, I was parolled out of JCS [Joint Chiefs-of-Staff] and I found out, again, how to do a paper in JCS. You got to understand the red, purple, green routine, MOS 98, and all these other good terms. You had to learn all that strange language in order to survive in their system.

But what did I learn out of it? But having just worked in Da Nang, where I worked with Marines, Air Force and Navy, it was not a surprise to work with different colored suits. My experience there was one of learning to how to work with other services, wanting to learn how parochial some people can be, and learning how to write efficiency reports in four different languages. They are all different. There's no common alley between them and I assure you that my boss did not write any efficiency reports. I did both ends of both of them. So I learned that lesson on how to work with civilian contractors and I learned how to find out what their real self interest was. So that was, I guess, the lessons learned out of JCS.

Then I went off to ICAF, which again was probably the best sabbatical I've seen in years. I spent a year in Korea, 3 years in the budget, a year in Vietnam, and a year working full time, because my boss didn't show up. I had a long spell of where there was no time off. ICAF provided that. Again, you are on you own to do your own thing. The year I was there, there were 6 Army guys there: [LTC] Fred Middleton, [LTC] John Goth, [LTC] Bill Sarber, [LTC] Jack Campbell (who the the other one was, I don't know), and myself. There's another one who I'll figure out in a minute. Phil Patrick was the sixth one.

One of those guys decided they ought to get us all together because we were all there as TC [Transportation Corps] officers and organizers. But

again, we thought we were there as independent Corpsmen. We kind of organized ourselves and we did whatever we wanted. That group was another chance to learn how to get along with Navy, Army, Air Force, and Marines. Because out of that group, we had a baseball team: the First Baseman became the three-star Air Force General; the Second Baseman is now the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Bobby Harris, the Third Baseman became the Brigadier General; the Catcher became a Major General, the Center Fielder became the Vice Admiral; and myself, I got to be a Lieutenant General. So we had a pretty good All Star Team. We didn't know it at the time. We were just having a good time. But it was a good group of people. But again, the best thing you got out of that was to listen to the people who came and talked and pick their brains. You find out who the spring bucks are in all the schools. We had our All-Star Team. It was a unique experience to sit back and contemplate your navel, refuel you batteries, learn something and learn from people, and how they were going to do it. Because we had Tom Brayne as a Major General and Bob Perkins had been a Lieutenant General. A whole group of people really succeeded out of that bunch. It was more than most places for some reason. It was a unique bunch of folks.

That's not the moral of the story. The moral of the story is we learn from each other. We learn who the good guys were and who the bad guys were because the thing you learn there (in a fifteen-man seminar, even though you are on your own and you don't have to do anything), you don't want to be embarrassed. So you come to work prepared unlike sometimes when you go to undergrad school, you don't have to be prepared. Here you didn't want to make a fool of yourself. So you did your homework. You came here prepared and did a good job.

We picked up two trips while we were there: one tour around the States, and one to the Far East. Everybody got to go to a different place. Again, we went to Japan and Korea. I got to visit with Mitsubishi, the steel works, Sony, and a few other major Japanese companies to watch them operate and go through their corporate structures. It was amazing and this was in '71. So they were still on the rise, really unique smart folks.

But ICAF was a good experience again. Getting to know people and getting to know how to work with different services on their ground rules was the best thing. We did that very well. We had a very successful year at ICAF. We learned a lot. We learned to work on these guys where the senior guys there were the real bright guys. Except we beat them at everything we did, including who was in charge when we got out of this school. So it was a good experience. While I was there, I was offered the chance of where did I want to go.

Back to JCS was where I was told I had to go. At that time, it was a chance to go Fort Eustis to command. Now the simple thing to do would have been to stay right here because my wife had been here now for 3, 4, 5, 6 years. My kids would have been very happy to stay there. But that was the easy way. The hard way was to pack up and move. So we did that. We packed up and moved with the promissory note that I got a command job at Fort Eustis. I showed up at Fort Eustis and I wound up in a three-bedroom house because somebody screwed up the housing. I mean you put 5 kids in a three bedroom house. It's very hard to do when one of them is a college freshman, one is a college sophomore, three of them are high school, and one's a little kid. It

wasn't a good situation. At that time, they extended the command tours to 2 years. So I had to wait 6 months to go to 7th Group.

So I went over and worked for a Colonel by the name of Jim Coleman who is another one of these people unique in a class by himself. Jim Coleman, in my opinion, has as much to do with me being a General Officer as any other general in the United States Army because he taught me things. He taught me how to do things. He taught me smart approaches to things in the 5 or 6 months I worked for him. Then a year and a half after that, I lived next door to him. It made it a very successful tour for me. Jim Coleman, who lost his leg in Korea, commanded a battalion at Fort Story. He commanded a group in Vietnam. He never missed a beat. But the Army was not promoting one-legged colonels in my opinion. They have now. They have several serving one-legged generals. Does that diminish their ability to get things done? But they made a mistake with Jim Coleman probably because he was smarter than some of the guys that were going to promote him. But what he did was when I was the 7th Group Commander (6 months before I was coming out of command), he arranged to go to ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] in Florida. He arranged for me to move over to the School and take his place which was the job. That was the job. If you are going to get promoted, that's where you've got to go for FORTRAINS [Force Training]. So I blame that on Jim Coleman. He could have stayed there another year very comfortable.

In the short time I was in the School, I learned how the School worked. I worked with civilians and I had the good fortune of being Doctor Darst's Rating officer. He's the guy that said I couldn't go to grad school. We used to kid about it. I never held it against him because he was right. Technically, he was right. But he's the guy that provided the spark to make me do better and I told him that. In fact, he stayed with me the whole time I was there. But he retired after I left. He said that was enough, he enjoyed it, and he quit.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay sir. We're going to the 7th Group.

LTG THOMPSON: Then I went down to 7th Group. In those days, the 7th Group was 8000 soldiers. It was a hiding place, a transition for all those soldiers coming out of Vietnam. That's when we were clearing out of Vietnam. They had no place else to put it. There were people coming home that didn't want to come home. There were junkies, drug addicts, thieves, and robbers. There were guards on the barracks doors. You were not allowed to have visitors in the barracks. You had theft and you had people taking shots at people down there.

So in order to solve that, we decided that we would move the Company commanders and myself back in the barracks awhile and take charge of that post and all government property. It only took a week of that before we took command of the whole place. We opened up the barracks doors and we found out who the ring leaders were. We did it so that we made sure that we locked them up in the chow line when they were causing the most commotion. We hauled them away in chains in front of their friends and neighbors. So that they would understand who was in charge. We didn't do it quietly at night off post or someplace else. But we did it in front of their peers. This was not to embarrass them, but to establish who was in charge. I would guess that in about 2 or 3 weeks, we didn't get the upper hand. But we got control. One of

the Battalion's headquarters was firebombed because they didn't like the Battalion commander. I had another case where a company commander was chased. That was when he went by a guy. He asked me, "What should we do?" I said, "We ought to get a baseball bat and chase him back. You take charge. You're as big as he is. Don't let him run you off." So he did. But we got control of that place.

Again, what was the key to success? We had 5 battalions in the 7th Group at that time. There was a rail battalion. I guess they're the 714th. The 38th Battalion was, extensively, a truck battalion. There was the 10th Battalion and the 11th Battalion. I started the 24th Battalion. They're all there. Fort Story was separate and distinct. So we had those 5 battalions. We also had lots of detachments. What was the problem? We were getting new equipment. We also had the 355th Heavy Helicopter Company. We had all kinds of tools and things down there. The 355th Helicopter Company came alive. That's when we first bought the CH-54s. During my tour and when I left there, all 10 of them flew at the final parade on the same day at the same time. After that, they dissolved the Company and gave them to the Guard.

But we were getting boats out of Okinawa that had come back from Vietnam that had been properly maintained. They were getting equipment from manufacturers which were not properly maintained. We were getting the calls of soldiers. We had all sorts of problems trying to keep up things. They were rehabbing barracks. They were running through NCOs [Non-commissioned Officers] like you wouldn't believe. They were rotating them in and rotating them out. I guess the most significant thing is that's the time that they declared that there was an excess of Aviation NCOs. So anybody that was in the Aviation business that wasn't in the job was sent down to the 7th Group. Twelve-hundred and some odd soldiers were assigned to the 7th Group for me to do something with. The suggestion was that I farm them out in all the 35 companies. I resisted that. I put them all in one twelve-man detachment which ballooned at 1200. I got them all in the theater and talked to them all about what they could do and couldn't do. Some of them signed up to become Marine warrants or Marine people; some of 'em signed up to be truckers; some of them signed up to be stevedores. For some of them, we found jobs for in other fields. Those that we didn't find jobs for, we put to work on golf courses and doing all sorts of things. Some of them, I just sent home for the day and had them come back the next day.

It was great consternation when that Morning Report hit the DA [Department of the Army] and they wanted to know why there were 1200 people. It made the Army Times, all sorts of comments of how dumb that was. I said, "How dumb it was to sent 1200 people excess to one place." So I want to be able to know how big this elephant is. I want to remind you every day that today there are 1199 of them left and tomorrow there's 1198. Till you eat this elephant, we are going to keep them all in one place. It worked and I had everybody's attention. It came out of MILPERCEN [Military Personnel Center]. They come down and they gave a speech about how we didn't use you. You guys went to Vietnam twice. We don't need you anymore. Those were almost the exact words out of the Assignment Officer that came down there. So we ran him off the stage and got these guys on my side. It was kind of like Buddy Ryan and Buddy Ball. But they knew who was going to take care of them. They worked for us and did a good job. Many of 'em went back in Aviation and many of them went into something else. They were all happy that somebody cared. I

had a good Sergeant Major who helped do that. He's Russel D. Harmon who's now retired down there.

MAJ HUNTER: Is that him, the Sergeant Major?

LTG THOMPSON: No. The First Sergeant Major was a guy by the name of Rexford D. Young who retired right after I got there. He was a very senior E-9. Then it was Russel D. Harmon and then it was Sam D. Rainey. I also had Command Sergeant Major Billy Rucker of the 11th Battalion.

What's the moral of that story again? There's a great big valuable asset out there that a lot of senior people and a lot of junior people never understand how to use. That it is your senior NCO [Non-commissioned Officer] Corps who are thirsting to be in charge. If you put them in charge of something and support them, they will do a first class job. Now these guys did just that. They made sure that that unit was taken care of because they were all senior NCOs.

The 7th Group was a different place. I had the good fortune to have good battalion commanders. [LTC] Jeff Daniels had the 11th Battalion. Then it became Harry Stevenson and then Ray Rachaels. Dwayne Aiken had the 10th Battalion most of the time I was there. Paul Nemos took over from Jackie Johnson. John Finlay had the rail battalion. Dennis Wilson had the 24th Battalion and then Reed Barnette. I had a good group of people, every one of them, except John Finlay got to be an O-6.

It was not because he was Rail. It was because he just never had gone out and done the things that he had to do. He had stayed at Fort Eustis for an extended period of time and he was content. Then he couldn't figure out why all of a sudden nothing happened. No. He did well.

MAJ HUNTER: It was during your tenure, sir, that the 714th was deactivated

LTG THOMPSON: I wish it was there when they did away with the rail. All the rail people swore that I did it personally. No, I'm the guy that said we ought to keep one rail company and one platoon of everything which we did. Now they've done away with it and now they are going to bring it back again. It's like Moses being found in the bull rushes or Christ coming off the Mount of Olives or something. It's like they rediscovered the wheel. It made sense to keep it then and it made sense never to get rid of it. No. I think the real reason was John Finlay never really done the things he needed to do to be a colonel.

But in fact, Dwayne Aiken was passed over one time. I had to fight to get him promoted. He was capable. The first day of his Battalion tour, a soldier went in the arms room, took a weapon out, signed it out obtensively to go hunting, went in and took a shot at somebody in the barracks. He spent the first night of his tour walking through the woods at Fort Eustis saying, "Come out, we won't put you in jail. Just come on out. We want to find you." We didn't know what kind of fruit cake we had. He came out the next day and turned himself in. But we wasted a whole night. Everybody said, "Oh fire him. Look what he's done." He didn't do anything. He inherited the same kind of a mess I inherited when the CMMI [Command Maintenange Management Inspection] Team came. You are the victim of what you got. Six months later,

I would have said, "Yes. You have better control." I was guilty as he was. Everytime you point one, there's four coming back at you. But we had a good group.

In those days, you had to cut your own grass. You had to police up your own end of the post. It wasn't like it is now. You did your own KP. We did the buildings over. We had some trauma doing some things. We solved the police problem because I thought that was an NCO problem. After about 2 or 3 times of being told my end of the post was dirty, I took the Battalion commanders and the sergeant majors for a walk around our area. It took about 6 hours to take that walk. They were sick and tired of me telling them by the time we got done. But I never had to worry about the police again. The police at my end of the post was solved because I made it abundantly clear that you were gone if I had to tell you one more time. But they got the message. The soldiers got the message and we did a nice job. We had several significant fires. We had vessels run into each other. We passed every inspection in the world ever known. We had faith and confidence in people.

At that time, General [Howard F.] Schiltz was the post Commander. The School Brigade Commander was my next door neighbor, Colonel Dwayne Smith. It was a choice of he or I going to the School of the Brigade, the Brigade, or to the 7th Group. Then somehow, I wound up in the 7th Group and he wound up in the School. He was a very competent guy and he was a very capable guy. Again, why he's not a General, I don't know. The Army makes mistakes. He is as competent as I am, if not better. He's smarter by far. But he did not get selected. But the 7th Group was unique. We had, again, a good chaplain. We had good Battalion commanders and we had some reasonably good NCOs. We conquered that riff raff that came floating through there. There were some good guys and bad guys. A guy that had served with me in Vietnam, who I had played football with, Willie Branch, was the wheel man for a drug bust one night. I testified as a character witness for him after pressing charges in a general court which blew the mind of the sitting judge. I said, "I'm not testifying whether he's a good guy or a bad guy. Now I'm telling you what I know about him before", which was true. I could not do that because he helped make my life in Vietnam good because he was one of my enforcers to keep the peace.

The 7th Group went through lots of changes in those days, again, because of people. Once we got the personnel turbulences settled down, then we worked on the equipment. We did some different things. That's when we became part of FORSCOM [Forces Command] and that's when we won our first exercises with FORSCOM. That's in order to do things. We went on such things as picking up all of the derelict vehicles in the surrounding county areas around Fort Eustis. What did that prove? It made great relations with the surrounding community. It got my soldiers off the post doing something other than moving empty boxes because we'd get releases from vehicles and the community people would put signs on them. We picked them up, put them on our lowboys, used our equipment, and got our guys on the road. We got them involved and it made great commuter relations plus it gave our guys something to do.

The other thing we did was when I got there, we were tearing down buildings on post. We were tearing them down with hammers and crow bars. I said, "Well, we are going to tear them down with the mechanical equipment." Well, that made the soldiers happy. So we took down a hundred and some odd

buildings around that post in a short period of time. We had a wager one time. It was a building right near the current PX [Post Exchange], one of the old barracks buildings. The only time we could take it down was on Sunday morning when the PX was closed. So I got my best crew. I said, "I'll tell you what. I'll buy the beer if you will take it down and move it out of there before the PX closes and you can't start before 8:00 in the morning." General [Jack C.] Fuson drove by there on the way to the church one day I guess. When he come back the building was gone. He asked, "What happened?" I said, "Well, go down to the dump and you will see them all down there drinking beer because they won the bet." All you had to do was motivate them, give them something to shoot for, and they'd get off their backs. It worked very well.

Is that the proper training? Did we teach them how to be soldiers? No. But we kept them gainfully employed, kept them doing some maintenance, and kept them doing some training with the equipment. Then we generated these other exercises: OSDOC [Offshore Discharge of Containerships], OSDEC, and all those wonderous things. We sent them off on trips down through the inland waterway which we had never done before. That made it good.

I guess the final proof of the pudding was that when they were breaking up CONARC [Continental Army Command] and forming TRADOC [Training and Doctrine Command] and FORSCOM [Forces Command]. Generals DePugh and [Charles C.] Rogers were down to visit Fort Eustis. General Fuson said, "We ought to show them a company. Which one do you want to show them?" I said, "Hey, let them come that morning and we'll pick one." He said, "That's like playing Russina roulette." I said, "We'll find out if the thing's working or not." We did and we picked one. They picked one and it worked very well. Fortunately, they picked the right one, the 1097th Boat Company. The Company Commander was a young fellow by the name of Bill Evans, a Captain at that time who had had a boat company for me in Vietnam. He was a first class young man who knew all his business.

They went from there to the 870th Terminal Service Company. They are not PhDs assigned a terminal service company. They asked the Platoon Sergeant by the name of Young, "How many men in this platoon?" He said, "Let's see, I've got 4 in the PX. I got four here," and he named all of them." He said, "I asked you how many?" He said, "I'm getting to that, General. There's 70 and I just wanted to tell you where they all are. I know where they are." That was the most impressive demonstration by a very solid E-7 who became an E-9. No, he wasn't a PhD. But he knew his soldiers. He knew how to take care of them and those guys. Generals Kerwin and Rogers left there convinced that I knew what I was doing. I didn't but they did. They proved again, have faith in soldiers and they'll do good work. They did do work. As I say at that time Sarber took my place as a group commander, we had a lot of turmoil there.

I guess the other significant event in the 7th Group was that we had a British liaison officer assigned to the post. He had to do a year in the Group. At that time, I couldn't find the United States Army Colonel who wanted to be the S-3 or the Operations Officer of the 7th Group. So I got him promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and made him the Operations officer. I had the best training program the world has ever known because he trained my soldiers better than they could be trained by anybody else.

In those days the 7th Group was responsible for guarding the block which

was the defense of the Washington area in time of emergency. We had specific location to come to. We used to train for that. We got to be so good that here we would have aggressor forces, good guys, and bad guys. They would have fist fights out there working on each other. When we deployed to Washington at one time, we got to the truck stop (at Jarrel's Truck Stop). Our soldiers were riding up in two's-and-a-half and they were bringing the 82nd Airborne up in Greyhound buses, air-conditioned buses. Fortunately, I was flying up by helicopter and I had to put the helicopter down at the truck stop. I got in between the biggest fight that was about to happen between our guys, involving me and the 82nd soldiers because they were riding in air conditioned buses and our guys were riding up in the back at two's-and-a-half. We prevented that from being a bigger war than we were coming to in Washington. But it gave our guys the proper spirit to see that they were doing right. It was a good organization.

We ran our own NCO Academy, we ran our own driver's training, and we had one of everything. The significant thing about that I found out was on July 6 when I changed jobs. I turned over the command to Bill Sarber in the morning, I went over to the Transportation School in the afternoon, and I took over that job as the Assistant Commandant. I found out that all this complaining in the 7th Group was about those people on the other side of the tracks. I got on the other side of the tracks. There was all this complaining about those people on the 7th Group side of the tracks which I had heard before when I was a Deputy Commandant. But I found out I still worked for the same guy. It was Jack Fuson who worked inbetween the tracks, who had taken over from Schulz. Now he took over from Schulz.

It was a three month period where [Colonel Irving M.] Coleman was the Commander of Fort Eustis which is indicative of how good Coleman was. He never missed the boat or a beat when he took over. So Fuson showed me a touch of class that you will see in very few people. Because when he came on the post in December, he did not change one thing I was doing in the 7th Group nor did he change one thing that Jim Coleman was doing in the school. But on the 7th or 8th day of July, he called [LTC] Bill Sarber and me over to his office and said, "These are some things I want you to do in the 7th Group. These are some things I want you to do in the School." He accepted the fact that the last two guys knew what they were doing and they had good ongoing programs. He reviewed the bidding while he was waiting on the side lines to change over and then he made the change. He never ruffled anybody's feelings. It was a new regime in both places. It could be done without any turmoil. That's a great object lesson for a lot of people when they take over someplace that you don't have to change everything to prove you're in charge.

First off, you've got to find out what you're in charge of. Then you can make the change if change is necessary. In those days, when they were forming (as I say) up TRADOC [Training and Doctrine Command], we went into a great period of short funding. The only place TRADOC could travel through was the T [Transportation] School to try all the new theories on. So I had General William DePugh in my back yard constantly. It wasn't Kerwin and Rogers, it was Kerwin and DePugh who came to visit.

Well, I had DePugh over there making his tape for television and checking on my classes and everything else because he couldn't go any other place. It was really a trying time because they were trying to revise the whole thing.

We were the guinea pigs. There were some things that I didn't agree with and some things my boss didn't agree with. We fought some. We made out on others.

What I did learn out of that? I hired, again, some smart people. Keith Kelly became my Director of Instruction and Andy Anderson was what is now the "Concepts and Doctrine" guy. We didn't have all this other thing. It was just one school that did everything and they were the two colonels that kept me alive. Again, my boss would let me go do things and learn from him. About every Saturday, he would say, "If you've got time, come see me." We would sit down and map out what had been done and what needed to be done. When he'd ask a question or want a briefing, it wasn't where I got the briefing and I went over and gave it. I'd make the Action Officer and the Colonel responsible. I would preview the briefing. But I would let them do it. It was a question from the subject matter expert. You had the expert instead of trying to get your own name taken. How smart am I? There are still people who do that, who want to make sure that they get it all. They go do it all and they cut the action guy out. That doesn't work too well if you are going to get something done.

That was a great traumatic time in the School because that's when we formed up the new terminal service companies. That was the keel laying for the new terminal service companies. The boats that are now on line, the 50-ton and the 250-ton crane, have now come to fruition. They were formulated in those days. It has taken this long to get the proper funding, get the TO&E [Table of Organization and Equipment] changes, and get all the other things. I don't say that I personally did it. I blame most of that on General Fuson who had the foresight to reach out and take that challenge and do it right. We were just the agents of change and he was the mastermind to od things. Some of the things he started then were great fruit. Some of them have fallen on hard times because people didn't follow up on them. Now they are coming back to the same things that they preached a long time ago.

That's like I listen and all the people tell me how beautiful the post is. His wife is the lady that started the post drive for trees and a place to place something, spruce the place up, and make it look good. Everybody is taking credit for that. But if you live long enough and you stay healthy, you know who really started some of this stuff.

The problem with the School was and Fuson helped change that image, was the School was not resourced with the proper kinds of people. We didn't have War College graduates and we didn't have Leavenworth graduates. I'm not saying you had to be one to be successful. But in order to have a winning ball club, you've got to have some coaches that will play the position and know how to do something and teach other people. His role as the Commandant sort of begot the proper kinds of people. Well, we did that. This School became more successful than we got. You could breathe some degree of success instead of running for cover all the time and trying to find out who is doing what. That made us successful and we did a good job.

The other thing that I can remember very vividly is the first year that I was there was that you're going to get promoted. Well, I didn't get promoted and that didn't bother me one bit. I was asked by General Fuson, "Where would you like to go? Would you like to go to FORTRAINS [Force Training] or would

you like to go to some other job?" My comment was, "Are you unhappy with my work?" He said, "Fine. I'll go back and do what I'm doing." I went back. That year he called me and said, "There is good news and there is bad news. The good news is that the BG list is out; the bad news is that you're not on it." The next year when the list came out, they called me one morning. He said, "There's good news and good news. Come on over here." So that was 1975 and it was my wife's birthday, May 5th. She was at the Thrift Shop. I went up to the Thrift Shop and said, "Guess what?" She said, "Fine. But you can't come home for lunch today. I've still got to finish working the Thrift Shop." So that night we celebrated and we had a good time.

What did that do for me personally? It was a great event. For the School, I think it was a great event. For the 7th Group, it was a great event because the 7th Group had not produced a winner in a long time. It was a winner in the sense that we got promoted. The School had not produced one for several years. So I had to change that image. After that, then followed [MG Orlando E.] Gonzales, and [BG Michael J.] Pepe, and [BG William Robert] Sarber and a multitude of the heavenly host: [BG Arthur Joseph] Junot, [MG Harold I.] Small, and all sorts of folks like that. So maybe it was the right image. But at least it turned it around. It hasn't gone the other way yet. But there was a long string of people that did well.

MAJ HUNTER: Let me ask you about an acronym called SOLE [Student Oriented Leadership Evaluation]. SOLE kind of came into its limelight while you were there and it kind of died on the vine while you were there.

LTG THOMPSON: It's coming back alive now.

MAJ HUNTER: Yes sir. It's called SGI [Smal Group Integration].

LTG THOMPSON: Did you read last week's Army Times? Keith Kelly wrote an article. Did you read that? Read it. It was in last week's Army Times. Kelly is the guy that I'm talking about. That was the results of putting little groups of officers in a section and letting them learn from each other as well as learning from the instructor.

MAJ HUNTER: I think it was Student Oriented Leadership Evaluation

LTG THOMPSON: Right. That's what it was. At that time, it was a good thing to do because you had a lot of people that had just come back from Vietnam. You had a lot of people. You could learn from the experiences of others. Then we got to a point where that was not there. You have to have someone who's got a varying degree of experience. We had to make sure we had a mixture: an Aviator, a boat guy, and something else (some guy that had been in Combat Arms). You had to have the right mixture to make that work. If you didn't, it would fall flat on it's ear. It was much more expensive because you had an instructor for each group or there were instructors that were going around to each group. So we had to reconfigure the classrooms and that was the purpose of the whole thing.

At the same time, we were going into the self-paced instruction which was great for some things. But self-paced was not the answer to everything. Now we went too far too quick in too many fields. We didn't keep enough known. We had too many variables. At one time, I expressed that opinion rather

vehemently. A fellow by the name of Oren Talbot was the Deputy Command General of TRADOC [Training and Doctrine Command]. He told me, "Young man, you have made yourself known. You've made yourself heard and now it's over. Follow the guidance." So I did. That's what SOLE [Student Oriented Leadership Evaluation] was. It worked good. But again, it was a function of the right mixture of people at the right time. Now it's going to be difficult to do that because it's more labor intensive. It's more costly and you're going to pay a price for it. I think it's a better way of learning.

MAJ HUNTER: You learn by doing instead of by rote memory. You retain it more I think.

LTG THOMPSON: I can tell you how many trucks there are in a light truck company to this day. I can tell you how to measure a Cooper's rating (Cooper's E rating on a rail line), or what a frog is. I learned all those in the Basic Course. I learned them again in the Advanced Course and I never used any of them. But the experiences of how they did something, how they got something done, and how they made it work is much more valuable. You haven't heard me say that I've learned anything in any school other than from other people and the valuable things that they've been able to do. That's the significant part of what we do.

But we learn from people and that's what SOLE was. That worked pretty well. Kelly was the architect of SOLE and Small came along and kept it going. [MG Harold I.] Small was my DOE [Department of Evaluation] after Kelly. Anderson had a heart operation and died unfortunately. Anderson and I went to school together. I guess John kind of took over after that one (Jack E. John). But I had, again, a good mixture of people who made things up. There was a black fellow down there. My Sergeant Major was down there in Bagwell, a very good guy. A black sergeant by the name of Charlie Cainan, who has since died, was a superb soldier that you could depend upon all the time. And again, good, good folks.

The other significant thing is that Schultz let you do your job. [LTG Jack C.] Fuson let you do your job and he gave you some guidance when you needed some advice and it worked very well. So I guess we got onto the 5th of May where there was good news and good news. After me, there was a long series of people that came and went as the Commandant until Junot came along. There were a couple of people that filled in in the meantime.

I left there on about the 6th of July or the 2nd of July and went to REDCOM [Readiness Command]. I took General DeHaven's place as J-4 at REDCOM. I had the good fortune for General Fuson to promote me. I got frocked 2 days before I left. I had to show up as a BG and I made BG on a Sunday in July. I don't remember what day. But it was more important for me to get promoted at Fort Eustis than it was to get promoted at REDCOM. So we went to REDCOM.

MAJ HUNTER: I have some more questions about the School.

LTG THOMPSON: Okay. Go

MAJ HUNTER: The first thing I was going to ask you was when you were at that School, we were going from Vietnam to peacetime. Was there a real big problem with student motivation that time?

LTG THOMPSON: There were two. You know you were right. Two significant things were glossed over. One was that at the beginning of every Advanced Class, I would go in and talk to the Advanced Class. I'd ask them if there was anyone in there that wanted to get out of the Army before they incurred a one year lock-in. At first, General Fuson was a little suprised that I would do that. I would get 4 or 5 takers. I would say, "Go home and ask your girlfriend, your wife, or whatever, and ask them if they want to stay. If you tell me now, we'll stop the clock and get you out." I'd get 4 or 5 takers. Was that smart? I think so because we got rid of people who weren't sure, who thought about it, who had never been challenged that way before.

The other thing that was really a trauma was when we had the great RIF in the '70s. Of one Advanced class of about 60 people, half were RIFed. I could not understand why they started them and then they got rid of them. I'd like to say that the problem with the United States Army is that we got rid of the lower one-third. So what we wound up with was the upper two-thirds which automatically fell down to the lower one-third. The lower one-third that got rifted was mostly NCOs who had gone to OCS [Officer Candidate School]. They had been give a promissary note for all of these great things and then they were not allowed to re-enlist. So they were caught on the horns of the severence list. Some of them had gone through Warrant School. They became pilots and then they became commissioned and then they got rifted. Some we managed to save. We kept all those NCOs because they had enough time. But there were not many. So we lost a lot of valuable experience. Again, I can't blame it all on personnel managers. It was just that they were the victims of numbers clinches. But we knew the guy that had to call them in and tell them. It is a difficult thing to do.

Throughout the time at the T [Transportation] School, let me tell you that the other thing that I enjoyed most was teaching all the new Basic Courses and the Advanced Courses. I had to give my wife a big plus because she had every Basic Course and Advanced Course there for a tea at the house or they went to the Officer's Club. She was raising 5 kids at that time. So she deserves 2 medals. I hear all these people tell me, "Well you got all this help. Couldn't you get any help?" Financial help or otherwise, I'm not complaining on this end. She made it happen. She knew how to do that. I guess the classic remark there was a young lady that came into our house and said, "I've been in the Army for 4 years. All of you have been Army wives. I'm not an Army wife. We're just married." It was a big putdown. But right away, this lady said she just missed the whole point. She was liable to do anything. It was a good experience.

MAJ HUNTER: While you were there sir, were there big adjustments in the curriculum? I know that we want to get away from Seoul. But we want to get away from the Vietnam syndrome to a peacetime syndrome. Is there any change at all in the Transportation curriculm?

LTG THOMPSON: No. We were still learning the lessons of Vietnam. We were trying to find out what we did, how we did it, why we did it, and how we can do it better. We did this because, theoraticlly, we did a reasonably good job. We were the first ones there and the last ones to leave. We hadn't done too shabby a job. There was an abundance of Aviators which you are not going to see in the TC [Transportation Corps] anymore. The Aviators, as I learned from General Fuson, are the best supplied maintenance guys that we have

if you don't watch out. But we had a pretty good organization. I stayed there for 7 months because in those days you got 6 months and you're gone someplace else. During that time, we solved most of the backlog problem. We got on with a pretty good maintenance program. We reduced the number of AWOL's [Away Without Leave], an example of what dumping ground it was.

The third day I was there, we had a surprise CMMI [Command Maintenance Management Inspection] in the middle of the day. Another one of these great wizzards decided that we should do that. It was the night before we had been shelled but not shelled directly. But the recipients of some fragments of rocket fire, which tore up the canvasses of some of our vehicles, was not reported properly on a 2801 or 2108 or whatever the form was. Therefore, the CMMI [Command Maintenance Management Inspection] team was going to flunk us. At the same time, the Mess Inspector is telling my mess that if he had a case of steaks from the ship, he could probably pass the inspection. This was the net sum of that whole thing. At the same time, the Arms Inspector was walking off with a sawed-off carbine telling my guys that we need to do a better job of maintaining our weapons. So I immediately ran them off and I did not allow them back in the headquarters at the risk of flunking the CMMI [Command Maintenance Management Inspection]. We ran them off. I was counseled that if I flunked another one, I was fired. But I figured, "What the heck? It didn't cost much." We didn't flunk anymore. We passed them all. But we did make Christians out of all those people that come down there. They were just selling their services to soldiers who were working.

It was a very interesting tour. You got to meet a lot of first class people and some of the dreads of humanity. At that time, there were many ships sailing with Third Mates as Captains. Some of them were qualified. Some of them were not. For instance, at one time, one of these captains drug his anchor and tore my bouy out of the water. I couldn't find my anchor. So I knew there was an anchor in front of the Navy headquarters in Saigon. So I sent the cranes and the lowboy up. We borrowed the Navy anchor in the middle of the day when everybody was watching. Later, they found out their anchor was missing and they came looking for it. I told them I knew exactly where it was. It was at the end of that bouy marker out there. But I needed it worse than they needed it in front of headquarters. We didn't get in trouble for that. They just wanted to know where their anchor was. So we properly accounted for it. That solved my problem. Did we wait for somebody to set the anchor? No, we had a chief boatswains mate from the Coast Guard and a chief boatswain's mate from the Navy station there: one for ammunition safety and one from other safety. We asked them if they had ever done that. They said, "Yes." So they set the anchor and set the bouy better than anybody else could. The sum of the whole story is that, again, you take the talents that they give you and do it.

There were some dumb things going on. We had an Artillery battery that was stationed there right with us. We were shipping the ammunition by barge to Long Binh and they were trucking it back for these guys to shoot. So we solved that. We direct-issued it from the ship to there. As a result, we had great artillery support. They had all the ammunition they could fire. We accounted for it, but they were getting direct fed. It worked very well. I had great support. Unfortunately, a young man that commanded that battery got killed two days after they displaced from our place and we got another battery in. He was caught in a misfire on the ground and was killed, very fine young

because they learned it better than anyone else

MAJ HUNTER: General DeHaven said the same thing.

LTG THOMPSON: They did it and they did it better than anybody else because they had gone to Haymarket and they had practiced for months. So most of them became very successful commanders of maintenance units because they understood it better than anybody else. It worked very well. They did a good job. But you know there was a transition. There had to be some. We weren't going to dwell on everything we did in Vietnam that was right. But there was not a dramatic change in the curriculum.

The biggest thing going on then was the concept and doctrine changes in TRAMEA [Training and Dcotrine Command Management Engineering Activity]. How should we do it in the future? How do we write TO&Es [Table of Organizations and Equipment]? How do we rewrite all of it? How do we rewrite all the TO&ES and those kinds of things? We had to get them down to eighth grade level so everybody can read them. How do you go to self-paced? How do you make all those things? It was just too much in everybody's plate to do it. It had to be done. You had to take all the cuts and you had to work with the caliber of people that they were trying to work with. That's why we needed some coaches to help these other people figure out how to write a paper.

MAJ HUNTER: Did you lean on the faculty members to do the RIF as well? Was there turbulence in the faculty as well?

LTG THOMPSON: Very few. The few that we did loose, most of them signed up to be civilian members of the staff & faculty. So that was not a big issue. The biggest trauma was in both the Group and the School when half the class would wake up. You want to finish the course? You want to get out now? Some guys stayed and some left.

The other thing that was tramatic in the School was when Vietnam fell. We had lots of Vietnamese and Cambodian students, Laotians, and Hondurans. Who wants to go home? Who wants to stay? How do you solve that problem? That was about 3 months of great trauma. Some stayed. Some went home. Some stayed for a while and then went home. Some went home and wished that they stayed. It was a mixed bag of everything. A young fellow by the name of Durwood Rushford was my Foreign Laison Officer who later got passed over to Major. He later got promoted to Major. He got passed over for the wrong reason. Nobody understood how much good he did accidentally. He did more good accidentally with Allied officers than people understood him. Now Lieutanant Colonel Bob returned.

MAJ HUNTER: Let me ask you sir. When you worked the AC [Assistant Commandant] chair there, I was told that because of the Vietnam winddown, there were a lot of budget cuts. Funding became a real problem. Its a problem today. I was wondering if you were able to fall back on your comptroller skills or your Accounting skills? Was that a really superb asset that you were able to beat them at their own games so to speak?

LTG THOMPSON: I think the advantage that I had wherever I went, whatever job I had after I got out of the comptroller business, was knowing the language. It was knowing, conceptionally, what you could or could not do. It was what

monies you could spend, what monies you could transfer, where the rules were, what the rules of the game were as you played them, and knowing the language. Speaking of language, not everybody was getting out there and giving you a snow job on what had to be when that wasn't so. But we survived that pretty well. Did we take cuts? Yes. When you took cuts, you didn't do things. In my opinion, Fort Eustis missed the golden opportunity during the Vietnamese war to put permanent installations all over the place. Instead, we settled for the tin shacks, a whole bunch of second rate things that could have been first class. The powers to be at that time, in my opinion, stood up for their rights. Look at Fort Lee, look at other installations, look at Fort Belvoir, and look at other installation that got all this wonderous funding. Eustis did not get much out of Vietnam other than tin sheds and shacks and a vinyl coating of a bunch of nothing. We went through some trauma.

The biggest thing, again, was people. There was always the people kind. Always the people kind. You don't need them. You contract that out. You cannot contract out that award. The Romans did that and that was about the time of the decline of the Roman empire. You got to fight for what you believe in.

MAJ HUNTER: I have one last question and I will leave the School here. I would like to compare military education systems today when we had CAS3 [Combined Arms and Services Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas] now in lieu of innovations to how it was when you went through and how it was in 73 or 74 when you were the AC.

LTG THOMPSON: I think that there was a bigger challenge for the students that went through the Advanced Course to solve than it was in my Advanced Course. In my Advanced Course, if you could memorize, you could remember a longer list of things. You could pass anything. It is like passing the IG [Inspector General] inspection. Rote memory could get you to the end of the course. I can show you my academic record. I was not a student. In my Advanced Class, I finished in the middle of the class. In my Basic Course, at the end of the school year, I finished last of the class. Only because academically, I couldn't really stress it. In my Basic Course, I finished in the upper third. In Leavenworth, I finished in the other class and I finished in the middle of the class. It's what you take out of there and how you make application of that good stuff. It will get you to the end of the road.

My favorite son, who was an academician, finishes first in everything. But he is also a good soldier. If I had a record that was as good as his, I would be a big success in the Army. He does well. He was off at the Navy War College. He finished first. The Army would still jump at him. What's the comparison? I think it is more competitive now. I think there is more emphasis on grade structure and on academic achievement. There is less on getting to know each other. There's less on family values with indiscreet to your family. I worked for a guy who preached family all the time. I think that there was less of that. There's less chance for a sabbatical to take that breather so he can go. Your battery gets charged and you go forth to do it twice as hard the next time. Is that wrong? I don't know. You have to get some great psychiarist or some psychologist to tell you about that. But I think that there has to be a regeneration time. Big business gets just as sabbatical.

The Army is blessed with its education system. We are finally getting smart enough to do that with NCOs. Of all the things that happened when I was the AC at the school was the start of the NCO education system. To me, that was the best, smartest, most productive thing that we did. Officers always had that advantage that NCOs did not have. Is it different? Yes. Is CAS[3] [Combined Arms and Services Staff School in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas] a step forward? Yes. As long as CAS[3] does not become a subject for text service officers going to Leavenworth or its equivalent. That's one of the thoughts that's always in the back end of the minds of some people. That's wrong. They're not the same.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay sir. The last question involving your tenure as the Assistant Commandant of the Transportation School deals with asking you to please recall your two most significant problems in running that School and how did you successfully attack those problems?

LTG THOMPSON: I would say that the 2 greatest challenges towards that assignment were the formation of TRADOC [Training and Doctrine Command] vs the old CONARC [Continental Army Command] system. As I mentioned, how do you deal in time of fiscal constraint? How do you deal with the inadequacies of personnel funding both in people, numbers of people, faces, spaces, and the dollars to support those people? I think that the solution to that was by getting, again, the right kinds of people and the right numbers with the right qualifications which overcame quality and help overcome shortages and quantity. The SOLE concept and the changeover to SOLE and to self-paced instruction was another significant challenge during the time frame. Other than that, it was strictly learning to make do in what wasn't the best physical plant in the world. It is still not the best physical plant in the world when you look at the other schools in the Army's school system. It has improved greatly since that time. But at that time it was an antiquated building which was not ideally laid out to do what we had to do.

A great deal of emphasis went into concepts and doctrine at that time which was at the time of increased emphasis in the Army of the future. What was laid out in the mid-seventies has now become the Transportation Corps of the future; the container handling companies, all of the improvements over changes in boat design, all the changes in aircraft design, the lighter, the LACV-30s [Lighter Air-Cushion Vehicle] were still on the drawing board in those days. Now you have the results of a lot of efforts, a lot of groundwork that was laid in those days. One of the significant people I mentioned; Keith Kelly, Hank Small, and other significant contributor was a fellow by the name of Paul Anderson. He died about the time I left there after undergoing open heart surgery. He made a significant contribution to what was and what is now become the fruits of his labor in the Concepts and Doctrine Agency. Another fellow that was still around down there and just retired is Jack St. John. He was another significant contributor to the future of the Transportation Corps because of his great analytical ability. The danger is when you start to name a great number of people. But these names stand out as people who were leaders in getting things done.

Other than that, as far as I'm concerned, the other significiant thing that I learned from the Transportation School assignment was getting to meet all of the people; all of the second lieutenants, and all the Advanced Course students during that two year time period. My wife had a series of coffees in

our home. We had lots of TOAC [Transportation Officer Advanced Course] receptions and TOBC [Transportation Officer Basic Course] receptions. The most significant thing you get out of an assignment like that is getting to know everybody that comes through the School on a relatively good basis. So that you are familiar with the people that you are going to have to work with in the Transportation Corps for the next 20 or 30 years. Those are the most significant things and challenges that came out of that.

MAJ HUNTER: How do you feel, sir, now they've formed the Aviation Branch and how that impacted upon the school?

LTG THOMPSON: It was an attempt, at that time, to separate the Aviation to teaching of Aviation subjects from Fort Eustis and the Center at Fort Rucker and send some things to Aberdeen Proving Grounds. Then take some things out of Aberdeen Proving Grounds and put them at Fort Eustis. My answer to that is there were a lot of things that were not broken. They are going to cost more money and fix something that's not broken just for the sheer sake of ego trips of some people that are involved in the Aviation or the Ordnance business.

But if you understand as I mentioned the fact that at Fort Eustis there was one boss. At TRADOC, there's one boss and the TRADOC Commander can legislate how it will be done and where it will be done. If you got a good investment in the teaching program, the facilities, and produce a quality product, you don't have to worry about the organizational lash-up and who has the most people assigned to their school at a particular location. I think that we would do a disservice if we separated the logistics portion of the School and made it report to Fort Rucker. It is not from a parochial standpoint, but from the standpoint that it works well now. It's well served.

A good example of how it has not done well is when we split out into an Aviation Branch. Those officers that were assigned as 15Ts from the Transportation Corps have not fared well. They will not for years to come under the promotion, command selection, selection for school, and other quality cuts because they, in essence, have become second class citizens to the rest of the Aviation Branch. I think that the same thing would happen if you were split off to logistics, Aviation Logistics School.

MAJ HUNTER: That's a good point sir. Okay sir. It was during this tenure that you received your first star. I'm told the flagpole out front of the School was put there because of you. So they are going to unveil your one star flag. It was from there you went on down to McDill Air Force Base to become the Director of Logistics of the J-4.

LTG THOMPSON: I may have said it before. But at one time, where you are talking about going to get promoted, I did not get promoted. Then General Fuson finally called and said that you are going to get promoted. That was a good day. It was not only a good day for me. But it was a good day for 7th Group and for the T-School because it gave recognition to all of the people who had a piece of what had happened. For years, Fort Eustis had been shut out in the selection process. If it hadn't happened in the 7th Group (ever before that) and the Transportation School, the last officer to be selected, I guess, was either me or [General] Alton Post or [General] Garland Ludy. I am not sure which came first. But they were the last people and then there was a big birth.

As I said before, probably the best qualified, most competent colonel I ever served with or for (Colonel Jim Coleman) did not get selected. That was a travesty on the part of the United States Army. I had the good fortune not only to get to be selected there but to get promoted there. That was fine because I was one of the few officers that was commissioned TC [Transportation Corps], stayed TC by all career, and was on a branch transfer from some other branch as many Transportation Corps Generals at that point had been. I don't know whether I was the first one. You don't lay claim to that. But I can't think of another one who was basically commissioned TC and stayed that way throughout his whole career and made it that way.

The transition to McDill was an easy one. You followed another Transportation officer there. In fact, the J-4 of McDill and most of the officers that held that job had been Transportation officers. General Pete Ryan, General DeHaven, and myself were Transportation officers. There was a David O. Morris in there as a Quartermaster officer inbetween. But I found General Buzz DeHaven down there. I guess there was a couple of immediate shocks when you got there. You may have thought that you were a big shot when you became the BG [Brigadier General]. But when I got there, I found out that I was the junior general on the post of the 8 generals present for duty for Air Force and for Army. But I had the good fortune, again, to fall into some very competent people.

The other shock to my system was that I was told by General [BG William R.] Hunzeker that I was the Senior Safety Officer for Airborne training. Therefore, I went back on jump status at what I thought was a very old age. It was a great shock to my system. However, I did it until they decided that the J-4 should relinquish the slot which I did with great joy because I had lost my enthusiasm for leaping out of airplanes just for fun. But it was a fringe benefit. I got to jump with my son who was on jump status. I enjoyed the few jumps that I made when I was there. Even though there was still some reluctance not to jump, but to hit the ground when you get close.

But McDill was an interesting assignment. It was having served in the Joint Staff and having served it in Da Nang with the mixture of Marines and Navy and Air Force. This was the first formal assignment at a senior level with a joint staff. A senior officer was General John J. Hennessen which I had mentioned. I had worked with him before when he was a Major and I was a Lieutenant. The next in command was an Air Force lieutenant general by the name of W. W. Marshall, who can be described as eccentric because he did some different things and some good things. But he did so many different things that he had people constantly in a state of turmoil. We had an Air Force Major General Jurraro and Air Force Brigadier General Tommy Knolls. So that made up one part of the staff in there. There was an Army BG by the name of Carlson. There was General Hennessey, General Charlie Hall, and myself. General Charlie Hall who later became the Sixth Army Commander, I guess, became my on-the-spot mentor because he understood what General Marshall, the DC, was looking for. There were times when I would fight him because I did not agree thoroughly with what he was after. But General Hall would give me some good common sense talks and try and explain to me what I could, should, and shouldn't do. However, we got along pretty good with General Marshall. We did some things.

The biggest thing we got involved in with at McDill was in the exercises.

They were BRAVE SHIELD, BOLD EAGLE, and other exercises of that nature around the world plus the Airborne Training Program and the enhancements for Airborne mobility, tie-down procedures, and other things of that nature common to both the Air Force and the Army. Originally, the J-4 would be the Chief of Staff on one exercise and then would rotate to another officer. But General Marshall, after one exercise, said that I would be his Chief of Staff on all exercises. You would think that would be a bad deal. It wasn't because each time we went on an exercise, we learned a lot about how to work and coordinate actions with a multitude of services. It kept you busy all the time. But it was better than just going out there and doing just your J-4 role because when you get into Joint Logistics, most of it is Service Logistics and the service guy is responsible. He's you're coordinator. But as Chief of Staff, you could have some influence on what happened, where it happened, and when it happened. So most of our time was taken up with the planning for Joint exercises. You no sooner get over one when we would start off on another one. So there was a lot of time, money, and effort put into planning the CPXs and the field training exercises.

The other significant thing that happened at that time was the start of what is now developed into the Joint Deployment Agency. It was the making of JOPS [Joint Operational Planning System]. One of the smart things that General DeHaven did was start some things to get JOPS [Joint Operational Planning System] on the road and JDA [Joint Deployment Agency]. But one of the smart things we did was to take a lieutenant colonel who was not a computer expert but rather a farm boy from Wisconsin. We insisted that before we adopt any of the procedures, that all of these great think tanks and smart guys would come up with, and that he further enhance that understanding and be able to translate it into English. That helped a great deal into making things understandable and workable.

The other good thing that came out of McDill was working with Air Force Transportation officers. I must say that because of the way the Air Force assigns people and teaches them in a specific field. I was blessed with 3 Air Force Majors who were good Transportation Officers as I have ever seen anyhwere. Two of the three became Colonels. Two of them are still serving in the Air Force as Colonels. The other one is a Lieutenant Colonel and he retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. The other thing I had was a Deputy by the name of Don Harrelson who was, again, a super expert in Transportation and the technical aspects of Transportation. Now his ability to translate some of the technical aspect was as not as good as other folks. But when you wanted a technical answer to a Transportation question, he had all of the smarts. So we had a very good group of folks that did that.

I also had down there at that time, a General Chuck Edminson who came to work for me about halfway through that tour. He had come to work for me, originally, in the Transportation School. I promised him a good deal there. He was there about 2 months and I left. So when I offered him a job at McDill, he made me promise I wouldn't leave. He was there 6 months and I left again. But I think that this was good for him because REDCOM [Readiness Command] had become a burying ground for elephants, for colonels. Colonels did not get promoted out there because most of the colonels that came there were content to go down and retire in the sunny warm climate of Florida. He came there from the command job at the T-School having graduated from the Senior Service College and was still competitive for promotion. Fortunately,

with the help of General Hennessey and some other folks there, he did get promoted. But he was the exception and there haven't been many officers before or since who, while serving at REDCOM, were promoted. But again, REDCOM was a nominative process and you could get almost anybody you wanted. The thing you had to guard against were repeaters and people who just wanted to come down there and enjoy St. Petersburg and Tampa. So we managed to find some folks that were very competitive. As I say, it was a good experience.

One of the misfortunes of that assignment was that the time the Air Force came up with the new Efficiency Report System. As an example, they legislated that only 1 officer in a group of 10 could be authorized to be rated number one. It was two for number 2, three for number 3, and the lower third. Unfortunately, I had 3 Air Force Majors: Smith, Freeze, and Rothman. Technically, they were competing against all of the other majors in the headquarters. But the Deputy Commander was an Air Force lieutenant general. He's the one that had the say over who got the ones and who got the twos. His aide was an Air Force major. The sixth aide was an Air Force major. So I just assumed that all the ones were gone with those 2 guys. He didn't see it that way. We had a long discussion about it. But he said that he would not change that. I asked to go get an exception which I had checked with Air Force personnel. They said it could be done. Since he wouldn't agree to that, I told him that it was time to see the senior Air Army guy in the block and that was four beats three. This was one of the first places I learned that four beats three beats two beats one beats none. So I went to see General Hennessey. He agreed and went in and got an exception so that his aide and the DC's aide did not compete for the number one slots. They were exempt. Therefore, I think that's one of the reasons that Freeze and Pete Smith survived in what was an Air Force debacle. They killed their young, ate their young, and destroyed a lot of very first class majors, lieutenant colonels, and colonels because it was not a good competitive system.

When asked by both all these three guys on how do you get to be a Lieutenant Colonel, I told them to get down and shine the DC's [Deputy Commandant's] Porsche and make sure that you been in the door everyday to see if he needs his shoes done. He didn't need a haircut because he was totally bald. I didn't want you to infer from my coversation that Marshall was inept. He was a very competent guy but a very complex individual who you had to be sure you were reading him right before you took any action. He could dream up more things that you could accomplish in any 3 days. You had to kinda put him in priority and make sure they were obtainable, affordable, workable, and they really needed to be done other than just to keep everybody actively engaged.

MAJ HUNTER: There, sir, you left McDill Air Force Base at REDCOM [Readiness Command] and went back to Washington D.C.

LTG THOMPSON: The interesting thing about leaving McDill was that I was called one day and was told that I was going to be the J-4 in Korea. I said, Can I go tell my boss that?" The guy said, "sure." So I went in to see General Hennessey because I knew that he was my boss. He was the Army guy. He would have control over my assignment. His comment was that no one has asked me if you're going to be reassigned. "Since you have been to J-4 here, there's no need for you to be the J-4 there. You've learned how to play this assignment as a J-4 and there's no need to go play the same thing. I'll tell you when you are leaving." I said, "Should I call back to General Officer

Branch and tell them?" He said, "No. They didn't call me. But I'll call them." That was the end of that. About 2 weeks later, he called me and said, "You are going off to the DA [Department of the Army] staff some place where you'll do something different and you'll have an opportunity to get promoted."

So after two years at McDill, I learned how to live with, live on, live around lots of Air Force people and some other services. I learned a great deal about exercises, Joint mobility, and Joint deployment exercises. I learned through two more REFORGERS [Return of Forces to Germany] which I later got involved in again in my next assignments. I was again followed General DeHaven to DETRINS [Detailed Routing Instructions]. He had gone through J-4 to DETRINS. He got promoted out of that job and he went up to be the Deputy of DCSLOG [Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics]. So he went to that job. He became involved in the Director of Resources Energy Transportation and Troop Support which is pots, pans, commissaries, laundry, dry cleaning, plants, gas stations, and all others to include strategic mobility.

The advantage here was that it was a mixed bag. It gave you a chance to learn a lot about things that you didn't know about: supply, maintenance, and Quartermaster activities. I also got to serve on the Board of Directors in the APEX [Automated Procurement Planning, Execution, and Control] exchange system. I got involved in the building of the Army commissaries and setting priorities for that. But again, you were the junior member of a group of people. When I got there, I found out that again after 2 years in grades of Brigadier General, I was the junior guy in DCSLOG [Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics] which meant that whatever something happened, nobody wanted to go. You wind up as the stuckee which wasn't bad. But I worked for one particular guy who would wait until the last minute to tell you that you are the stuckee. So that was a little difficult. Finally, I had to go and explain to him that you don't wait. If you are going to stick me with something, stick me early so that I didn't go up and make a fool of myself and him too. I told him the next time I got sent someplace on 5 minutes notice, I would tell him that I'm here pinchhitting for you with 5 minutes notice. That got his undivided attention. From then on, he would give me a little better idea of what was going on.

I can honestly say, I was quite content being a BG [Brigadier General]. I was still very happy to have been one of those selected. People said, "Oh boy, don't you think it's time you got promoted." I would say, "Well, we are, we will, we won't. That's not bad being a one star dropout. I spent 2 years in that assignment.

What was the significant parts of it? At that time, we put together the Army's energy plan. That was the time of great energy conservation. A General by the name of Walt Bachus was an Engineer officer and he was the Engineer representative in Energy and Troop Support. He was the lead on the Army Staff Agency to do the Army's energy program. Between his guys and our guys (the staff officers that work for us) we'd come up with an Army energy goals that were significant: 20 percent reduction in energy use and gas, strategic mobility fuel use, home energy use, and all these great game plans. I kept saying, "Are you sure you can do this Walt?" He said, "Oh, no problem. We laid together a very good plan. We sold it all the way up through the Secretariat. About a week after that, we sold the plan. He retired and went to work for some outfit. He still lives in the Washington area. I wound up

as the sole stuckee with the Army energy plan. First year or two, it worked easy because there were a lot of obvious savings out there. It got tougher and tougher. Twelve years later, I can tell you it worked. Either he knew what he was talking about or the Army had more things out there on the table you can take off. But somemhow it did work. The Army continued to be the leader in reduced Army energy, reducing the use of energy and leading the whole (not only the defense department), but probably the country in how to do it better. So we did some of the obvious things.

The other thing we got involved in at that time was the building of new commissaries. At that time, we were still in stables, outhouses, and all sorts of things. But we started to take up the surcharge for commissaries. We came to the point where we consolidated commissaries right prior to my going there under one agency, the Troop Support Agency, which was responsible for all commissaries. That was the case where I was, technically, the Rater of the Commander of Troop Support. It was a two star general and I was a one-star. So we had to arrange that some other way. But the coordination between the two (General [Robert lee] Lemon, Bowers) and myself had nothing to do with rank. It was how to get the job done best. It worked very well because that started the building of Army commissaries. You see now around you a number of new commissaries that are the fruits of that labor in getting the right priority. We didn't always agree on priority. Sometimes we have differences of opinion about how commissaries should be run. But he was the expert. If you want to build a commissary one place, you would see some politics into the thing. It would overwhelm you and overwhelm logic, if you will. But if you recognize that, you didn't get into any trouble.

As an example, there was a cut in dollars, people, and spaces for the Army commissaries system. At that time, General Walter T. Kerwin was the Vice-Chief. So I figured out the only way to do this was to close some commissaries which was my guidance. I said, "I will close 2 in the Washington area and 1 in Presideo." I went up to brief on that and I was immediately thrown out. That was not a viable solution to come up with some other answer. I said, "That was the best place I can think of." I was told one last time, "Out! Come up with a better answer," which we did. We weren't really just throwing gold watches upon the table. We were trying to take a rational approach to it. It didn't sell. But we got around that problem. There are other ways of doing your business.

MAJ HUNTER: How much did you close? Which ones did you close?

LTG THOMPSON: We never closed any. We come up with innovative ways to hire people, to contract out some things, and do shelf stocking by vendors. Other things up to then were not done. But with temporary-hire employees, we got more work out of our employees. We established some standards for stocking shelves and checking cash registers. I must say, there is no Safeway cashier in the world who does as much volume of business as a commissary cashier in any one given period. They may not be the greatest and you may wait in line a long time. But it's no better than the civilian side of the house. Those people don't do near the volume of business that we do in the military.

The other good experience was being on the APEX [Automated Procurement Planning, Execution, and Control] Board of Directors which met every quarter. I got to learn a great deal about how APEX works, what a complex organization

it was, what an operation it is, and how tough it is to run something that big. You are talking about a billion dollar business that a lot of people do not understand. They think it's only organized. The myth that many wives still believe that APEX only sells seconds is not true. The myth that APEX is only in business to make money is not true. The myth that APEX only works for its own good for its own people and for its own hours has changed. At one time, I think, that was partially true that the hours were geared up for the employees. Now I think that it is geared up for the soldiers and their dependents. But that came by evolution as a result of a couple of good commanders down there. One was Duanne Stubbs and more significantly, the guy that is the Commander now, General John Long, who I have had the good fortune to work with 2 or 3 times. But it is the experience of APEX and in dealing with the senior APEX manager. Again, you have read over time in the last 10 years of all the swindles and scandals and the bad guys that work in APEX. You never heard about the good folks that worked in APEX that made the place work, got the things done, produced a system that does good work for soldiers all the time, and still produces a profit for our welfare fund. There has been great controversy both in the commissary and in the APEX business about putting everybody and everything, either all the commissaries for all the services, under one system and all the exhanges under one system.

Will it work? Yes. Would it work better? I'm not sure. You would have to change the mind set in the Marine Corps and the Navy on both of those items because they are the only independent horsemen that we have out there. The Air Force exchange and the Air Force commissaries system is as good as any, if not better than the Army commissaries system only because it's new. It's all in new buildings. It's all new people. It didn't start in stables and other things which were inadequate. Again, it's in major installations. The Army has lots of people in out of the way places that the Air Force does not have. So we pay a penality for being diversified and being in odd places. The Navy, again, is in major installations. But the Army is scattered around the world.

The other significant thing that was going on at that time was this was the time of the quality of life for the soldier in Europe. Anytime you had a message from Europe, it was immediately responsible. Do it. Well, there were some things that were good and some things that were bad. One of the things that I can remember very vividly was the conversation about letting dependents eat in dining facilities because the Dutchmark went down to a low rate. Well, we fumbled around with that one for about 3 months.

Finally, I had 5 colonels that worked for me. A colonel by the name of Jim Kovak was the Deputy. A colonel by the name of Bob Stratti was in charge of commissaries, laundry, and Quartermaster things. A colonel by the name of Dudley Orr was my energy guy. He was a petroleum expert. [COL] Ted Rosenberg was a Transportation guy on strategic mobility. [LTC] Al Mode was the pots and pans of the local and all other Transportation items. With those 5 guys I had, they were always doing their job.

In later years, I told the stories of the IG [Inspector General] that as a brand new BG [Brigadier General], I still though that I was a brand new BG when I get there. I'd walk around to all of the men's room and I'd either meet Mode or Rosenberg. They had been friends for years. They would say, "Hey, do you know what the General said?" I said, "No, what did he say?"

They would repeat something. I said, "That's a dumb thing." He said, "Well, you said it. I went out to explain, "No. I really didn't say that. The translation may be that. But that's not what I said."

What's the moral of the story? At least when I went to the men's room, I'd get some guidance from my friends amd neighbors. Then when I went to the 21st Support Command, I had my own private facility there. I had to go outside to get guidance and information because I was talking to myself when I went on in there. It made it more difficult to find out what the General had said because the translation of what the General said and what the General means sometimes is vastly different and hard to understand. People wonder why would they do such dumb things. I learned a little bit more of that when I talk about the 21st support Command.

Back to the story of the eating in the mess halls. We fumbled that one around for a long time. Finally, we agreed that it was a good thing. We sent a message saying do it. Somehow, it got up to the Secretariat level and it was a great consernation on who had sent the message. Well, I was the guy that signed the message out. So I had to go up and defend myself first with the DCSLOG who thought that he was in trouble with the Secretary of the Army. The answer was no. He wasn't unhappy about it. But he, as Secretary, was the one that signed out the message. So we recalled the message. We got it back in. I was told that I would coordinate it that day with everybody in the building. So there would be no question as to who had seen it including DOD [Department of Defense]. I had the good fortune to know a very senior civilian at DOD level. So I took him up and told him that I needed one of my blue chips cashed. He ran the message in about an hour. He got the DOD chips from the Comptroller, from the Assistant Secretary, Installations and Logistics, everybody that I needed to do that. This is a true story.

I had been chastized and told that I didn't coordinate it properly. I let it come out of the building prematurely. I was sitting at my desk and it was all done. The night cleaning lady, Mrs. Woody, was walking through the office. I said, "Mrs. Woody." She said, "Yes?" I said, "What do you know about Europe?" She said, "Nobody reads about it in the paper." I said, "Put your initial on this paper." It was my duty to go up and see the Director of the Army Staff, General John McGifford, and give him the paper before four o'clock. When I took it up, he said, "Did everybody coordinate it?' I said, "I'm going to tell you something. Everybody including the night cleaning lady got her initial on that. That's Mrs. Woody." He scratched his head and said, "I think you're crazy. But okay, I accept the message." I still have a copy of the message and Mrs. Woody is still the night cleaning lady. She tells all of her friends that she helped chop a message one time.

But it was just another example of the bureaucracy and the frustration that can get to you if you let it. But you have to rise above that and not get excited and get on with other things. You could read the Washington Post in the morning and know where you are going to be in trouble with Jack Anderson. He had your name in his column. You had better get the facts down on paper. I forget exactly what the issue was. But I came to work one morning and one of my senior civilians, Bill Dunning, had already put together a fact sheet answering the allegations of Jack Anderson in the paper that day. He said, "You want to take this upstairs? We're all done. We won't have to worry them about calling us." I said, "No. You better hold it for a while

and see if they even bother to call because if you take it up now, they'll expect that service everyday." So they called about 8:30 and wanted to know what the facts were. Everybody wanted to charge up and give them the peer press. I said, "Wait until after lunch so we don't get them spoiled with instant service." We still got it up there in plenty of time after the mail. But tomorrow, the story was now don't overreact. Don't give them too good service or they will expect it all the time and you may not be able to do that. But it was an example, again, of a good dedicated civilian who knew what he was doing, who had all the background, and who can get things done. You could tell a million stories about all the people that knew what was going to be done.

At that time, we were in the process of trading off ammunition facilities with the Navy Vessel Support Systems. We were going to get some installations there. They were going to get some installations there. They were going to get some installations. We were going to give up different pieces of real estate at Kings Bay. And they were going to support us at Military Ocean Terminal in Bloomington, North Carolina. It was a great big question about how you get that done. There were a few people who could sell anything better than Colonel Ted Rosenberg. So I made him the A guy on that whether it was his job or not. I put him in charge and he would go out and sell those things. He could sell anything to anybody. He still does and still can. So we had the good fortune to make all that work.

Now down in DETRINS [Detailed Routing Instruction], they have two civilian deputies. There were two FCS [FEderal Communications Systems] employees in addition to a deputy. I just think that it would make it awful easy to take all of the fun of running the games. We had good folks that you could depend on. The action officers were superb. There were many civilians that had been down there for years and years and years. As an example of the caliber of people that I had is action officers. As Majors, I had Fortunato, Landis, Weikle, Durrante, Rosenberg, Raboskey, and Frietag. They were all newcomers of the future. So it made your life easy if you could let them take their head, do their job, get it done, and get on with it.

Lots of people, when they were assigned to DETRINS, thought that was the end of the road. In fact, I've had a couple of officers say to me, "I don't think that I want to be the DETRINS." My only comment was that DeHaven was a DETRINS and he became the J-4. I was a DETRINS who became the IG. Honor was a DETRINS and he became the J-4. Jimmy Ross was the DETRINS that became DCSLOG. So i guess it can't be at all a bad job. People really didn't get down there to be the elephant burial ground. But like most jobs, it's what you make of it, what you get out of it, what you put into it, and the quality of the people that are there to make it work.

We had a great personnel survey at one time we were down there. That's the time when they had started Resource Management. General Bruen was the Director of Resource Management. He was trying to get more people and my boss kept commenting that your folks go home at six o'clock and don't work weekends. I said that if you want something done, we'll get it done. But we're not going to sit by the telephone. We had a management survey. Each one of those colonels that presented his case said, "well, we got six more people even though we were going home on time and some of the other folks took personnel cuts." They took it as a personal affront when that happened. We

got the people. But we would up detailing about to some other folks so they could get their jobs done. But we had people who knew how to get the job done, who had to get something done, get it on paper, get it coordinated, and get it sold. It was a better side.

The best thing about that was learning commissaries, learning Quartermaster functions, raising registration, and a whole series of things that I didn't know about. I spent more time as any TC [Transportation Corps] DETRINS doing Quartermaster functions than I did in Transportation because I thought I understood the stratetic mobility business. I had experts in the household goods business that could handle those things. The biggest household goods fiasco I came into was the day that General Kroesen, General Kerwin, and General Rodgers all moved on the same day. Now if you have three elephants parading around in the battlefield and trying to coordinate their three moves, that was probably the biggest challenge to management I ever had because the same day they did that, the then Chief of Staff of the Air Force moved in. His furniture had been in storage and it had been demolished by the time it got to his front door. It wasn't a good day for Transportation guys to be around. But we survived that too. It worked. I went to a meeting and then from DCSLOG to General Del Mar to me as the stuckee or who was responsible for that stuff. But we survived it. It worked well.

At that time, after two years there, twenty months I guess, promotions came out. General Bruen came out on the promotion list. He was still there and I came out on the next promotion list about four or five months later. I was on my way to go to Munich. But as it worked out, I was told that I would not go to Munich. General Bruen would go to Munich since he was senior to me. I would stay there for another year. About that time, General Johansen was getting to retire. He wanted to bring all of our folks up for him to talk. I asked him if he could come down and talk to our people down in the pits where they worked down in the basement. I never been assigned on anything but the basement of the Pentagon or the first floor. He came down and while walking between the Energy Office and the Strategic Mobility Office, he asked me if I would like to go command. I said, "Any time, any place." That was right after being told that I wasn't going anywhere for another year. I told my wife to take down the wallpaper, we're staying or leave it up, we're going to stay. I'd go anywhere just to get out of there and do something different even though he was leaving. I would be glad to leave his tender loving care.

And he told me that I had been nominated to go command the 21st Support Command which I knew little or nothing about. I did know that General Hardin had been nominated. But that didn't work because he became the Deputy for AMC [Army Mobility Command] and got promoted. Another officer was nominated. He got promoted and didn't get to go either. I said, "Yes, positively." That was on a Wednesday morning. On Thursday, I was told that I was going to the job. I would have to be there within a week or two. There was no way I could do that because Friday I was going to get promoted. Saturday, my daughter was getting married. I didn't think that I could not do it all on Sunday and Monday. So I was told that there was no way out of it. I had to do it under that time schedule and the only one that could excuse me was the Vice Chief and the Commander of Chief in Europe. Fortunately, they were one in the same because General Kroessen was the Vice Chief. He had already gone to Europe and he had taken over and he had come back to finish up his Vice chief job. I saw him in the parking lot that morning. I walked up to the third floor. I

asked his secretary for an appointment and I was allowed to go in to talk to the great one. At that time, I could explain to him that I needed another week to get organized because I had a wedding to work on and a promotion to worry about. He said, "Is it your wedding?" I said, "No." He said, "Fine. That's okay. Take what time you need, arrange for it, and tell me when you want to get there. Since I'm going to Europe anyhow, I was partly responsible for your going there. Let me explain what I want you to do when you get there." It is not loke Eisenhower's challenge for OVERLORD. But it's quite similar.

It is probably as good guidance as I ever heard or received or seen given. His guidance to me was to go take command of this place to allow people to learn what they're going, allow them to make mistakes, learn from their mistakes, train them for the future, not look over my shoulder, and he would not look over mine. If I needed help, call. If I didn't continue to run it there, the USAREUR [United States Army Europe] staff would work for me and the DA [Department of the Army] staff would work for him. The staff of the 21st would work for all of the people below us. He told me if I needed help, call on him. If not, go run a good place. You couldn't play the super bowl every day. But you had to be prepared to play when the day came to play it. that was about the sum of his guidance.

I got to Europe. I sent in, set a moden, and that was about it. He did give me another week to do it. Fortunately, I got promoted on Friday, got my daughter married Saturday, rented my house on Sunday, and arranged for the movers on Monday. Within about ten days, I was in Europe taking command of the 21st Support Command. I was the newest Major General of all of Europe. It was after four years of being a BG [Brigadier General] when most of the guys have already disappeared from the scene. I was quite happy and quite surprised. I moved right into Central Quarters. The Brigadier General had moved into Central Quarters, the Army's most affluent job. So we moved into a different set of quarters right around the corner. When I got there, it was a great experience.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay sir. We are getting into 21st Support Command

LTG THOMPSON: What was the most significan thing about it. The 21st support Command rose out of the ashes of the old TRANSCOM [Transportation Command] htat had moved from France to Worms, Germany. As I later found out because of a personality clash and disagreement among senior officials, it was dissolved. It became the First Support Command. General Story Stevens commanded it for a while. General Bob Gaskill commanded it for a while. They they upgraded it, justifiably, to a two-sergenat man. General Larry Jones and Dave Watts, for two years, took command if it.

It was a highbred conglormerate of everything that the II Corps and Headquarters, USAREUR [United States Army Europe], did not want direct control over. It was all the maintenance facilities. It was all the supply facilities. It was the communities outside the Corps. It was the kegging operation. It was hospitals, ports, maintenance. It was the jailhouse, the mortuaries. It was whatever was left over. It was also all the military justices on a geographical area, everything outside the immediate Corps area.

When I say the immediate Corps areas, we were responsible for those items

for the Eighth Division, for instance, that was stationed in the Mannheim area came under the Commander of the 21st for military justice. So one of the biggest challenges and one of the most time consuming operations I was involved in was the military justice system for all of Europe to include the Azores, to include SAudia Arabia, to include any place outside the continent of Europe that belonged to European command. But they gave it to us to solve the problem. That was a big job.

I worked with about 43 lawyers on an area basis. There were times when the current Chief of Staff would call me and say as a division commander of the Eighth Division, I want to administer the justice in this case because it was one of the senior officers. He thought, technically, it would be better for him to do. I would agree to that. But 99 percent of the cases were done on a geographical basis with no complaint from any one. I will talk more about that a little later.

What did I find in the 21st Support Command? I found a loyal group of 27,000 civilians. I found about 8 or 9 thousand military who were joined together, loosely, by common bonds of support. That was not a great staff. When I got there, there were two officers or three officers who had any significant experience at the DA level. I don't mean that it's necessary to do everything. But in order to teach other people, you had to have some coaches.

I was fortunate that a fellow by the name of Bob Goode became my Chief of Staff. He had been, was, is, and always will be probably the best trainer and teacher that I've seen as a Colonel. He would take the time and put his talents and efforts to teaching young officers how to do things. I had him and I had a Colonel by the name of Bob Bass who was the DCSPER [Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel]. He was the only officer that had been there for any extended period of time. He only know six when I got there. The rest of them were either just leaving or had just arrived.

We had a new Engineer by the name of Pete Rowe and we had a new Chief Staff by the name of Bob Griegs. Bass was the only senior officer who had been there. Out of DCSLOG, those who had been there for two months were leaving Europe in 10 months. That was a big turnover position. Most of the positions were like that.

I guess the most significant thing and the biggest shock to my system was there was no deputy. So fortunately, there was a very senior colonel by the name of Carl Mott who had been the IG [Inspector General]. The DAIG [Department of the Army Inspector General] General Treffory agreed to let him fill in as the Deputy Commander of the 21st. This was a great help because Carl Mott had been there 2 years as the IG and he knew the strengths and weaknesses of that command better than anyone else. He was probably better than as the Deputy in the first in several months. I had a brand new BG Deputy who didn't know the organization and he was learning how to be a BG. Carl Mott was a unique analyst, very qualified, and was a great help to me in getting in place. He and Drury and Bass were probably the keys to survival in the first two months. There was another officer that was very capable as a resource manager. He was a fellow that had been passed over to Colonel, finally made Colonel, and was superb. It was a Colonel by the name of Ancil Pressley. Pete Crow was the Engineer. I name these names because these

people joined together to bring that organization from a bunch of rams and would be rams and couldn't get things done to what became not only in my opinion but nobody beat us in anything in Europe. We got whatever we went for and we did it and we won every argument.

Here's an example of how low things were. The first time we opened up the promotion list at Lieutenant Colonel and checked the results, we were 0 for 35. None of the 35 eligibles in the 21st Support Command was selected for promotion. When I raised this issue with the personnel folks, they said that I had gotten my fair share. I never believed that zero was a fair share of anything unless it was bad debts. I wasn't unhappy with the people that were there. There were some very competent people. But you couldn't have a mind set that everyone in an organization was a passover. Passovers are good on Jewish holidays. But it was not good when it comes up on promotion lists. So a squeaky wheel got the grease after one year of doing many good things.

Again, one of the people that came in to help make this thing work very well was a brand new BG selectee by the name of Kent Fluey. He called me one day to say he had just been made BG and that they were sending him to the 21st Support Command. He would be there in about two weeks. He had to come back to the Charm School, then be back in Europe for two weeks, then be back for some other school he had to go to to get through the BG wicket, and then he would be back around the first of the year full time. So I told him that it would be much better for everyone involved since he had just moved into the Washington ares. He bought a house and was stuck with the house and had to move in five months. If he stayed here and got all the schools and all of the things he needed out of the system, we would sent him the things that he needed to learn before he got there. He would stay here until the first of January which he did. That allowed us to get his house set up, allowed him to get all those things out of the way, allowed him to take care of his house, his personal problems, and allowed me to learn what the 21st was all about before he got there.

Because I say again between Bass, Drury, and Mott, we were able to keep things moving in the right direction. It was a group of dedicated people who wowrked hard. I would say the first six months in the 21st were long hours, long times learning what to do and how to do it. The significant part of what I had to learn to do was how to learn how to get involved in joint logistics, coalition logistics, or host nation support. I had assigned to me a U.S. civilian whose job was the USARFLO [United States Forces of the Laison Officer]. He was able to teach me the inner workings of the German government: state government, local government, national government, and how it all pieced together. I ldarned the difference between the local Burgermeister and Regulums President and the Minister President and all the official titles. I learned how the WVK and how the LVK worked and how the german civilian structure worked. That was a significant part of what I dealt with every day. So by doing this, I was able to learn a great deal. I'm sitting here reaching for his name and I can't reach it. His first name is Bellows. His wife's name is Lisa. His daughter now goes to William and Mary. I see her often and I can't for the life of me think of his last name, but I will. But he mad things work very well. During this learning phase, again I talked about the military justice part of it. I had a fellow by the name of Mitchell Plant who later became a military judge in the Army. He was s superb individual who taught me how to do things. He would come in with a cardboard

box full of cases about once a week

The key to success in that organizaiton in doing the military justice was you had to do it often. Because you have processing time, you have due process of law. So I gave him open access. There were people that I would open access: probably more for the Chaplain, the JAG [Judge Advocate General], the Chief of Staff, and the Judge. They would come in at any time and lay it on the line. The Sergeant major had that access, but I am talking about the unique relationship with people. The Sergeant Major could come in any thime and I stayed up front. The entire time I was in the 21st Support Command, I had the same Sergeant Major who in my opinion is a good as any Sergeant Major in the United States Army that has ever been produced. He retired there on that job. He stayed there in Germany. He now works as a civilian in that area.

There was a fellow by the name of Command Sergeant Major Ted Spellesy or Spallachy. I call him Spellesy. I think he said it was Spallachey. He accepted Spellecy. He was a tremendous individual who helped teach me further what was Sergeant's business and what was officer business, how you should stay out of each other's business, and let them do well. He did that very well. I never made an E-9 or e-8 change that I did not coordinate with him and didn't coordinate and understand the E-9 structure and how it works in the United States Army. There is an e-9 structure, which if used properly, is most helpful. If not used or abused, it can be detrimental to getting things done properly. He was superb.

So when you think about running a billion dollar business with a select group of five or six individuals, that's where we start. We had some good dedicated civilians some of which had been there since the days of the invasion. A fellow by the name of Al Monroe was the Deputy Comptroller. He's still there and he has been there forever. There was Mr. Demetus and the German power structure around the depot and around the organization. Once you learn how they did things, how to do things, what you could do, what you couldn't do, and they got on your side, you had no trouble keeping ahead of the game. So I guess for the first six months, it was a challenge. They we had REFORGER [Return of Forces to Germany] coming up. We had CEGE [Combat Equipment Group, Europe] and we had a whole bunch of things going on. After about six months of being there, probably one of the first moves I made and one of the first independent decisions I made was that it was time to upload all of the equipment on CEGE.

Why? Because I found that people were going out on REFORGER and never breaking the bands on the boxes of tools, test equipment, parts, and bringing them back. Therefore, they weren't doing the maintenance. They weren't doing a lot of things. It came to my attention (thanks to Mott and some others) that if you are going to be attacked, it will be right after REFORGER when they walk away and leave a division set of equipment sitting out in the mud. So we did several things. One thing we did was insist that the Division stay and do the first extension on maintenance on their equipment to get it clean and serviced before you put it away. Then we would tag those things that need major repairs. But they were few and far between compared to having to do all of the extensional and all of the servicing of vehicles.

What did it cost the units? It cost very little. They knew when they

were done. They could go home. We didn't keep them in pup tents. We put up tents for them. We made it bearable to live there and we made it affordable and interesting to stay. The other thing we did was to decide to upload all of the equipment.

The 21st was a unique place and everybody that came to Europe had to come visit us. So in one week, I had the good fortune. I had from SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander, Europe], the Vice Chief of Staff, the Chief of Staff, the Commander in Europe, all come to visit plus the Third Corps Commander which in those days was Jim O. Techcavolsus. I told him that I thought the thing to do would be to upload the equipment. They said, "Fine. If you can do it, do it. But I think that you will never got it done." I said that it would take a while. We'll do it. We did it over a three day period.

What did we find out when we uploaded all of our equipment? We found out that we unloaded vast quantities of warehouses which freed them up to store other things and get things out of outside storage. The council that I got was that it will loose more things. I said that no, it's a lot easier to put things where they belong on the vehicle. Store them all the same. Make them all look alike so that in time of war, everybody would know what they were getting and we did that.

What did we find out? We found out that we had lots of things missing that were not in the boxes. We had lots of extra things that we didn't know we had. We found out that when you loaded up a whole battalion's worth of equipment, the mobile equipment would not take all the stuff. There were too many gadgets in an armored calvary battalion. So we reduced some of the things that they didn't need.

The other thing that was interesting was that in those days, every division commander would come over to visit his division set of equipment. They found out that that's great except that each one of them wanted things stored his way. His radio is on the right hand side. His radio is on the right hand side. His radio is on the left hand side. I likened it to a horse rance for every jockey that had his own individual colors. You couldn't have that because technically if one division was due to deploy and it's division set of equipment was blown away, then it would show up someplace where the radios may be in the wrong place. So we decided (we, being myself) and eveybody else, not to ask anybody. We just sent a message saying that's what we are going to do and nobody challenged us. So we continued to march and we got them done.

We standardize the mounting of all equipment to include the repair parts, the repair parts bin, and the tools stored on the truck. Everything was done one way. If you recall Frank Sinatra's song, My Way, that's the way it went. It caused a lot of consternation. But I again I say that having had convinced the head guys, including the then FORSCOM [Forces Command] Commander, General Shumaker, that's the way it went. We got it done that way and everybody signed up. Three days later, it was all done.

What was the saving? The saving was in the warehouse space. The saving was in loadout time. That saving was in a lot of things that had to be done and we didn't loose anything anymore. We saved more things than you could inventory quicker when you would open the sponsor boxes on the tank and say

there's all of the pieces. They are where they belong. It made it a lot easier to inventory.

It was the decision to standardize and upload because I'm thoroughly convinced that one of the strengths of the United States Army is standardization. It's not having to think about whether you are going to, how you pull out of the block, or how you do something, be doing the simple things by rote memory and by training, and not having to think about how to do things. That's what we accomplished when we did just that. There was a lot of heartburn over how you do that, who's going to do it, and whether it is going to get done.

The other thing that happened at that time was the decision, as a result of the Court of Administration's Project Forward, to put a division set of equipment up north in the BENELUX [Belgium, Netherlands, Luexmbourg] LOC [Line of Communications] block area and open up the CEGE sites up there. At that time, we were still in the throes of building CEGE sites. They were still running mine detectors around policing up unexploded ordnance from World War II while we were building buildings to put them in which were being built by U.S. Army Engineer troops. They were great big like glad bags, rubberized, rubber material stretched over a frame over a concrete pad before we went into the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] construction of warehouses. These were the first things built. At the same time, we were receiving whole division sets of equipment. It was a major challenge to do all at the same time. Fortunately, a lieutenant colonel, now a colonel, by the name of Joe George was the guy in charge of BENELUX LOC block. He could march and shoot down at the same time, keep all of the balls in the air at the same time and did just that. It took a lot of work because we hired a work force. We developed the site. We moved in equipment all at the same time. So you have three big variable going on all at once. The thing that helped with the work force is the bridgework scaling down up there. So we hired a lot of expertise, primarily sergeants and officers to become our supervisors who spoke German. It took care of the language barrier. They knew the area. They were familiar with Army procedures. We had to teach them U.S. Army procedures.

Did it work? It worked. Was it difficult? It was very difficult. Did it create problems? Yes. As for instance, there was a message that came out of DA saying that you will have a ribbon cutting ceremony and run REFORGER. This was in eighty or eighty-one out of the BENELUX LOC block sites. There was no way you could that. The equipment wasn't there. It wasn't ready to go. So we overcame that. But we continued to build up all those sites and do all those things. As for instance, the Engineers gave us beneficial occupancy of some buildings that we stayed in. Among them, there was no lights, no power, and no water. There were still some ditches around some of the warehouses they turned over to us telling us that they were ready for occupancy. They were not so. It created a little controversy between myself and the Engineers. But we won that argument. We got it fixed and developed the whole thing so that it worked pretty well.

At the same time, we were negotiating with the Belgics and Netherlanders for land and for contracts at different sites in Belgium and Netherlands to put CEGE sites there. It worked. It started. Later as the IG, I got back to look at some of those. I think that's one of the better decisions we made.

At the same time this was going on, my predecessors had started to build the site in Luxembourg. That was a success story.

That was one of the best contract operations in existence today. There are seven. There were a few of us folks assigned to that operation. It is a CEGE site of large magnitude with lots of tanks, lots of trucks, and lots of equipment stored there. It works very well. It works very well because the Luxembourg government supported it very well. That's a case where we didn't go through a bureaurcy of building. We went through the Luxembourg government and in six months, they turned a cow pasture into a first class maintenance and storage facility. It wasn't without faults and it wasn't without problems. There were those who said that it should not have been done. It was done too quick. We didn't follow the rules. We didn't do a lot of things. But it's something that worked and it has continued to work to this day. In my opinion, it is a model of how you can do something when you get off the diamond, put free enterprise at work, and make it work. It does well. So all these balls were in the air already the first year. So it made for a very complex thing. The thing that helped me there again was the fact that when General Loui arrived, he was an expert in supply and maintenance. So I made him the supply and maintenance guy. I made him the community in charge of taking care of communities. That didn't mean you could abrogate anything because we had to do all those things at the same time.

Another significant thing that we learned out of this whole thing was that there would be people who want to come over and use the same division set of equipment in every REFORGER. I said no that we are moving things from the south to the north and moving things around the battlefield. We looked at the long range game plan, what things needed maintenance, those things in maintenance, and those things stored in CEGE indoors. They were supposed to be done in three year cycles. I found that some things were being done every year. Other things are being neglected because we didn't have the time, talent, or money to do it. So we programed it so that again, when things are standardized, divisions could come over and use somebody else's equipment and not pay a penalty. When it came time to turn it back in, we would withdraw it down south. The exercises up north returned it up north.

What did we save? We saved all of the Transportation costs. We got it moved for free. We got it maintained on a cyclical basis. We helped come up with a long range game plan to do all those things. Who did this? All of the smart guys did it. Probably one of the smartest moves that I made was to hire Billy Stompep who is now Brigadier General back in Tenessee. He was a Colonel who had not been to the War College but who is the best supply and maintenance man I know. I called him and siad to him, "How would like to come?" He said, "I got to wait for June if you don't mind." That was in April when I called him. He came in June and that was a great success story because he infused some smarts in the supply and maintenance business. He coupled with Loui and the other people I had working out there. A fellow by the name of Ball Van Houten ran CEGE. He knew moe about CEGE than anyone else. He carried a book around like a telephone book that had the answers to everything in it. He was a unique kind of guy. He used to tell us battalion commanders to look in the want add section because you may be looking for a job. So I used to carry a copy of the Washington Post want ad section with me and I said, "Bill, you are next." But he was a good first class gentleman. I named some names at the risk of leaving some out. But no one was blessed with better talent in

particular skill level jobs. It's like running a footaball team. You can have some guys who are not quite so skilled. But you have to have some skilled positions in there or you are going to loose no matter what you are going to do.

The other thing that helped turn the place around was that next year, after all of my badgering of the military personnel folks, I received three 0-6's from the War College and 12 Majors from Leavenworth. Instead of putting all 12 Majors in headquarters of the 21st, I scattered them throughout the whole command. I put some in different places so that everybody had a piece of what was good. The three Colonels became my JAG [Judge Advocate General], my IG [Inspector General], and my plans and operations officer. Pete Bradley was the IG. Jim Zachary was the DCSLOG [Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics]. Charlie White followed. He was the best lawyer the Army had as my judge.

What was the impact of these people? They made it possible to do things we hadn't done before to teach everybody. They raised the level of expertise tremendously. They we were able to train other people in how to do things right. About that time, Bass went home. We heard that Mickey parish and some other folks came along. So I started to say that Stolcroft came. He was not a war college graduate. Because of his expertise and his dedication, we got him credit for completion of the Army War College. Instead of just getting a piece of paper in the mail, he went up to the Army War College with me one day and he was presented his diploma by the then Commandant General Lawrence. I thought that was appropriate rather than sending it through the mail. You can buy one of those. But again, that gave me good players in the key positions. The other thing that helped solve my other big problem was the community activities. We hired or had hired in the communities some very capable people. A fellow by the name of Bill Reeves was in Risenbrooken. They downgraded that to an 0-5 job. I moved into Mannaheim. he ran the third largest community in Germany with distinction. I had Sonny Smith who I had know for many years. He had been my son's ROTC instructor in Worms. I had Jerry McConnel in Bremerhaven (having hired him) who later became the BG. One of those people who didn't follow the traditional route to success (did not have an 0-6 command), but he was a community commander. He did that so well that he straightened out Bremerhaven. That's the kind of people I had running those sorts of activities.

Probably the other significant big job I had in Germany was the 29th Aerial Support Group which was the Kaiserslautern Army Depot. We were not allowed to call it a depot because there were no depots in Europe. It looked like, smelled like, felt like, and was a depot. The Germans knew it was a depot. So I continued to call it a depot. Colonel Bob Saucer had it the first year or so when I was there. He did a very good job. He even went from down there down to Tennessee. He was followed by Colonel, now Major General Sam Wakefield. He did an exceptional job keeping that place alive because that is a complex thing. It ran Germersheim, Midheim, Luxembourg, and it ran the 29th. It had quarter of a billion dollars or 300 million dollars for a budget. It had a workforce of about 20,000 or 15,000 people. It was a very complex thing. It also had all of the German labor service units which now became CLU [Civlian Labor Units]. They were sort of the power of military organizations, very capable, very competent. They wore military uniforms. But they were civilians by nature. The civilian workforce in that outfit made the place go on because there were not a lot of green suiters.

They had responsibility for a lot of strange things in the community I expect. As for instance, the 95th Amphib Battalion had MPs [Military Police] stationed at Bremerhaven, Pirmasens, Schwabach, Kaiserslautern, Karisruhe, Mannheim, and Worms. That's unlike an Artillery battalion or Infantry battalion or Armor battalion. We said fall out the Battalion. They didn't fall out of one building. That Battalion commander spent most of him time on the road checking on his troops. It was the same way with every other battalion in that organization. None of them were stationed in one place where they had cohesion. They had to build this cohesion from afar off, very difficult to do.

One of the best Battalion commanders I've ever seen was a fellow by the name of Don King. He was a MP battalion commander. He was one of the best battalion commanders I've seen in the maintenance area. There were two maintenance battalion commanders. One in the 51st Maintenance. His name was Bill Ostertag. He is now a Colonel who was the G-4 of the 5th Corps. The other one on the 66th Maintenance Battalion in Kaiserslautern was Hank Fitzpatrick who is not the Commander of Logistics Forces in U.S. Army South. Both of these gentlemen were able to hold together people and get the best from them in areas of endeavor, physically, mentally, and spiritually. We were able to do a superb job. When you go through the selection process and get battalion commanders, you are not going to get too many bad people.

There are the best of the best and these were the best in those fields. The ammunition guy was superb. He was a fellow by the name of Jim Griffith who had all of the ammunition forces in the 84th Ordnance Battalion. All were very competent people. As 0-6s, I've mentioned Van Houton. He was followed by Mark Crebson who is now retired. Both of the gentlemen retired. They never got promoted. Why? I'll never know. Maybe they were not enough slots to go around. Colonel, now Major General Mark Browsford was my Ordnance expert in the 60th ordnance. He got to be Major General. Community Commander of Pirmasens, Lynn Stevenson, went from Colonel to Major General. He is still serving on active duty. So again you can see that in the causual community, two of those gentlemen have gone from Colonel. Van Logensel was a Colonel when he was there. Now he is a Major General commanding Fort Leavenworth. Charlie Williams was a Colonel when he was there. When he came there, he was a new Colonel. He is now a Brigadier General about to be made a Major General, commanding one of the major Engineer districts in the United States Army. So that's the kind of folks that we had to work with and to operate with. That was not too shabby a force. I guess we are up to about the 1983, 81, or 80-81 time frame. We are now without the full impact of the three officers from Leavenworth, three officers from the senior service college, plus the 12 officers from the Leavenworth class of '80. My answer was that was a good draft year. Those are the people who helped turn around the whole place.

Again, I say that the best part of working in Europe was the command atmosphere that existed at that time. General Kroessen was my boss all the time except the last four or five months that I was there. General Pat W. Crizer was the DC [Deputy Commandant] the first two and a half years I was there. He was a superb gentleman. For the first three months I was there, he came down about once a week to check to see what was going on. Finally one day I asked him. I said, "Is it because you don't trust me or is it because you are not sure I'm getting the job done or why do you come don so often?"

He said, "Don't you like three star generals?" I said, "yes. But I don't need one every week to tell me what to do." That was a parting conversation. About a week later, I was in Heidelberg and General Kroessen asked me if I didn't like three star generals. I said that yes they are okay but if he didn't have complete faith in me like his initial speech. He said that he did. It was just that General Koressen was getting used to what was going on in the 21st also. From that day forward, General Kroessen never came there unless I invited him or unless he would call and say, "May I?" Even though he was my boss and my ready officer, he gave me that. He recognized that perhaps he was donw in my knickers too much, moe than he needed to be. He pretty well let me run my own show. Now I don't say that I didn't get guidance when I needed it. But I didn't get weekly guidance. I got guidance as required or as needed and not on a return basis. I was a firm believer that the 21st was so fragmented, so widespread, and so well broken up. There were just two Generals: myself, and a Brigadier General Deputy. But there was no way you could influence every action of everything that happened. You had to have, as your diploma says, special trust and confidence in the abilities of the people that work for you. It was broken up into Colonel size pieces. They they broke up in Lieutenant Colonel size pieces. They they broke up in Major size pieces.

Did we do some dumb things? Yes. Every time we do something dumb, I try and let my boss know we did something that wasn't going to work and we are not going to practice it. We learned from that experience and go on and do something better next time. And I think we did. I think that in the process, we fulfilled the challenge that General Kroessen gave me. That was to train people, let them learn from their mistakes, and go on and do bigger and better things. Lots of people did that. As you can see by the number of people that have succeeded from that organization, a lot of people learned their lessons well.

About the '81 time frame, I became aware of the fact that the 21st Support Command was an unfilled three star slot. I learned this about in the 80s. I didn't really recognize that until I was there for about a year. One year in a meeting, General Kroessen mentioned that they were going to select a commander for the 21st to fill the three star slot. I asked him if I was a cindidate or would I stay there as a Deputy. He said that as a matter of fact, you have an interview with the SECDEF [Secretary of Defense] on such and such a date and don't screw it up. We'll let you know when you are going to go.

So I was in Rotterdam giving a speech at the Transportation Command up there. I left my wife there to ride back in the back end of the van. We traveled in the van because she couldn't fly in those days with me because it wasn't legal. It is now. They got some sensing with it. I could fly there and take my secretary. I couldn't take my wife which was kind of dumb. So we traveled all over Europe in a van which was better to get around in than the staff car. She went to Rotterdam with me and I sent her back. I flew out of Rotterdam, came back to the States, had an interview supposedly with Mr. Casper Weinburger. He was busy. So I had Mr. Frank Carllucchi. We had a good interview. You get interviewed by the Chief of Staff. When I came back, I told my boss that I thought things went pretty well because I was told that Mr. Carllucchi made the decision on the SECDEF. So we are all done. Rather than wait to find out what his decision was, I said, "Well, you know everybody

is going to have to sit around and wait for you to make up your mind. I'm going to ask you point blank. Am I acceptable or not." He said, "Certainly. But I was certainly cocky." Then he would expedite the procedure. So I left and came back and told my boss that I had been accepted. He said good and that he was glad that I did not screw it up. He did tell me when I was going to get promoted. Within about 10 days, I was promoted on the 19th of June in 1981. I got another phone call from General Kroessen saying that I had been confirmed by the Senate and when would I like to get promoted. So he came down to our place on the 19th of June and did that for me. So within two years of arriving in Germany, I went from one to two to three. Again it was timing, opportunity, proper place, proper time, good support from people you work for. It all came together as if by magic and it worked.

What was the biggest problem I had then? What had been a major challenge in the Junior Major General of all of Europe. Having to take on the world became much easier because at that time, we swapped up coor commanders. During my tour there, we went from General Beckton to General Loosey to General Galvin. On the Seventh Corps, we went from General Berry to General Scott to General Williams. In the fifth Corps, we went through three DCs, crizer, Forrest, and Wetsel. The whole time I just stood steadfast patting my foot. So I got to be the resident expert. Because I was promoted in the job and the other two guys had to wait until someone retired to get promoted, I would up as the senior Lieutenant General in Europe which was quite a shock to everybody's system including mine. They my challenge was how do you perform as a three star General? I learned these lessons from three guys or probably four guys.

Let me backtrack a minute and say that one of the best experiences that I ever had with anyone was with General Ken Loui when he came there. He was a mature, common sense guy who was not worried about was he going to get promoted, what was in it for him, but only what was in it for the people that we worked with. No one could have a better working genial deputy than he. I explained to him that Brigadier Generals os all of the things that Major Generals don't want to do because we were still practicing four beats three beats two beats one beats none. You learn that quickly and I learned it quickly that there were a lot of things that he could do. But never forget the fact that you are still responsible for whatever goes on wherever you are. But he did that as well as anyone I've ever seen. About a year after he was there, which is only about a year and a half into my tour, General Kroessen wasted another one of his phone calls on me. He said that he was going to make Loui the SUBCOM [Subordinate Command] Commander. I said, "Why?" Is it better for him?" He said, "That's good for him in the long range game plan and it will help him in his career." I said, "Well, do I get any chocies on my deputies since you are getting Jim Demoss?" I said, "I didn't know Jim Demoss." He said, "I don't know him either because he's a Brigadier General and he will probably get to be Major General. He's yours." He was an air defender. I took him and Pete Bradley who was an air defender as my IG. I knew him and said that he would do a good job. He's entirely different from Ken Loui.

Technically, the boss shouldn't have to change. But if you are going to maintain balance and forward movement of your organization, there has to be some subtle changes by everyone when you change deputies, when you change bosses, when you change senior officers in senior positions. So we did things

a little bit differently. The cohesion that had been built up and the synergism that existed when he got there had to be changed. Very honestly, he and my Chief of Staff did not see eye to eye on everything. About two weeks I had to call both of them in and organize their thinking. Both of them, well intentioned, well meaning, tried to do what was right. But because of personality differences, they clashed, where Loui and Drewy had gotten along hand in glove.

I have to say the strength of the organization of the 21st was that when I first got there, the CG was gone four or five days a week. I went to the staff meeting upstairs. By doing that, they were two things. You were running the staff and the Chief wasn't. And you were bound to be there every morning which you shouldn't have to be if you want to get out and about to see what is going on. So we changed that. I would go to one staff meeting a week on Monday morning. The rest of the time, the Chief ran the meetings. We cut the staff meetings down to where I was the action officer solving their problems. They come up with their solutions to problems or things they couldn't get done and needed help on. It took about three or four months to get everybody thinking that way and we finally did that.

The strength of the 21st was that we did meet once a week. Every prime time staff officer met once a week. We got our guidance back and forth with each other. We would talk about things until I would say, "Okay. The voting is over. This is what we are going to do." There was not any question about what we are going to do. It was how we are going to do it. What was the advantage? The USAREUR [United States Army Europe] staff was so big and so many folks that they seldom got together in one room where they were able to pull that coordination. So therefore, we won most of the arguments. And again, I say we did not have too many. When you were a little kind, you played the game "May I?" We didn't ask, "May I?" If we thought it was right, we went ahead ond said that this is what we are going to do. We are going to upload the equipment. We are going to standardize the equipment. We are going to move things around the battlefield with REFORGER money. No one could find fault with it. So therefore, they couldn't challenge you because they didn't want to work hard enough to try and take us on. We won all of the money arguments. We were the victims and the beneficiaries, I would way, of a group of people that supported us.

One of my biggest challenges was and continued to be getting my fair share of the people because you can buy things, but you can't do that with people. I've said it many times in many places. It takes nine months gestation and eighteen years to grow one. It takes basic training, advanced training, and then some other training before you get to the first soldier on the job. We put men to the moon and we do all kinds of things long before we can do that. The gimmick was to get the right people in the right place at the right time. That includes the civilian personnel folks that we hired.

I was challenged by the equal opportunity officer that I did not hire enough minority members. My question to him was you go back to the CPO [Civilian Personnel Office] and ask them how many minority members were referred to me? The answer was none. I said, "Well, then I hired one hundred percent of what you sent me. If you don't refer any, I can't hire any. If there is none available for hire, I can't solve that problem because I don't read whether they are black or white or green or blue." We won that argument.

In fact, one of the most significant things I did was I had a black equal opportunity officer who was not performing. When he left, he filled a false travel voucher. He was not one of the better people I've ever worked with. When he left, I hired a fellow by the name of Goode Pieres who was Hispanic obviously. I had a complaint file which is still going on some eight or nine years later by a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant who said that I was bias and prejudiced. I guess he looked at my name Nathaniel and thought I was an minority group also. But he insisted that I had done something wrong. I have spent more time and money of mine to defend myself against something when I'm convinced I did no wrong. Again, it was someone who just thought he could take to court the system. But we had some of everything. You name it and we had every race, every creed, and every color.

The other thing that was the strength of the organization was the AG [Adjutant General] Officer by the name of Edwards and he was replaced by Tom Colley. Dave Edwards was an exception. We would sit and every field grade officer assigned to the 21st Support Command, we would hand massage into the right places. Why? Because there wasn't that many. If you didn't put them in the right place because of the way we were spread out, we had a tough time moving around the battlefield. So we considered whether they had exceptional children, whether they had family problems, all of the things considered, and then put people in positions. As a result in my four years, I think we moved three people. That was for cause, not because of malassignment. That's because things went had in a hurry and they had to go. That, I think, was another strength to the whole thing.

The other thing that happened while we were there would be to come up with a new efficiency report system. So in order that when sure that we had equity in the efficiency report system, we looked at the rating scheme for every officer in the 21st Support Command and added total. We spent a lot of time doing that. What did that do. It made sure that everybody was going to be rated by his equals or his coequals. One battalion commander would be rated by a Colonel, another one rated by a Lieutenant Colonel, one by a Brigadier General, and one by a Colonel. Everybody had a fair shot at the same thing. That created a lot of problems because then you create a lot of things where you haven't by a lot of efficiency reports. If you do that properly, you had to get out and see a lot of people and do a lot of things. So I retrogressed. But I could not leave it without saying that one of the strengths of the place like Carl Mott, Bob Reddick, and all the other folks personally coming to me. It was Cantaloe's contribution to the 21st Support Command. The proof of the pudding is now he's back as the Commander of the 21st Support Command. It is a position which he was very well qualified for. I go back to about the June, 1981 time frame.

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We had a lot of high powered help living up there that consumed a lot of resources that caused us to do a lot of things. We also had an outfit in England which was very good, Brentwood, England. It created a lot of problems. But it was a good place to go. Everybody wanted to go to England and the other place was Brentwood. So we had to fend off people going there we had some other classified missions that everybody wanted to go see. I finally convinced my boss that I would be the final authority as to who could go and who couldn't go visit these places because we were so inundated with strap hangers that we couldn't get anything done. We had to shut down somebody's operation when people came to call. We were falling further behind because of visitors, not because of other people leaving their work. He gave me that authority and it worked very well. We had some people that didn't like it. They didn't get to see or visit some of the places they like to visit. It was not particularily the places that I'm talking about. But it was areas that I'm talking about. So that cut them out of a good deal. But I didn't have time. My comment was that there were so many visitors while we were there, that you could spend all of your time with greats and the near greats coming and going, the Assistant Secretaries, GS [General Service] ump-de-umps, everybody else. My suggestion to USAREUR was that on Monday, they should go to USAREUR headquarters; Tuesday, to the Fifth Corps; Wednesday, Seventh Corps; thursday, our place; Friday, shop; and Saturday, go home. That way, we would only have to do it only once a week instead of every day. I never did sell that idea. But it sure made a lot of sense to me because about that time, the Secretary of the Army came over and installed what was called QUICKLINK.

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other senators who go on came over. One of them said to me one time, "What is your drug problem, General?" I said that I did not personally have a drug problem. They probably came from his district anyhow. We would be able to straighten that our for them. Senator Scoop Jackson was still alive at that time and he said, "Young man, you are very aggressive." I said that I'm not young. But I am aggressive." But I felt strongly that the way it was said is what took me off and I didn't think I needed to file down any soldiers. The same thing was with Senator Thurmond. There was a congressional staff rider who had been and didn't come out for four days.

At the end of a briefing, obviously, he didn't listen to it. He hadn't shaved in those four days and he looked like a bum. He said, "Why do you have these dumb soldiers? How do you handle that one?" I said, "I take exception to that since I am a soldier and that puts me in the same category. I'm probably as smart as you are and a lot smarter than you are ever going to be." Sentor Thurmond said, "Sonny, now don't worry. He really didn't mean that." He could say sonny because he was a lot older than I am. But that's the mentality that you have to defeat in some people who had never been soldiers or don't understand soldiers or don't know how to talk to soldiers. So we put that fellow out and we threw him out of the room. We told him not to go in the PX, not to go anyplace near soldiers because they are too dumb for him to communicate. We put him in isolation for the other two days he was there and let him worry about it in some other way.

Senator Thurmond stood up for us. He is a soldier supporter. That's the kind of things that you learn out of exposure. Your soldiers hear about that and they magnify it and amplity it. It doesn't hurt their morality either when you know that they are not dumb and they are not dumb. Soldiers are smarter than the average bear. Let me tell you. You treat them whether they are dumb or not. In any one time frame, you went from there on the rest of the two years.

I went there for a two year tour. After the second year my wife said, "When do we go home?" Probably the time I got promoted, I asked him what closing and what was the debt meaning. He said, "You just started a new tour. You will stay here as long as I do. I said, "How long is that?" He didn't know. So we went on doing what we are going to do.

We ran REFORGERs and we ran a whole lot of exercises. At that time, we started the host nation support initiatives. We started working on cooperation with the Belgics, the Netherlanders, and Brits on how we are going to do exercises and how we are going to plan to go to war in the next war.

A lot of things had been on the drawing board for years. But this is the first time that things began to become the intuition. We flipped through some of those initiatives. In later years, they have come to intuition now that there are 90,000 or so Germans for host nation support. Then there was territorial command of the Dutch and all of those things that General Bruen continued to plug for, and bring to intuition, and make work right from the drawing board forward. He certainly solved all of those problems. But that was teh start of all of that to put the laison officers up in Belgium and put laison officers in the Netherlands. It was to do the things that I had to do. For a long time, there was a discussion about who was going to be responsible for the area and for the Army jury in the rear of the Fifth Corps, which

included a vast area of space that I was told there were no soldiers there. There's no money involved. It's just take over this are and made it and be responsible for it. We did the survey and we found out there were five thousand soldiers and their dependents and a whole lot of people scattered out in little isolated places. I refused to accept it until we got the money, time, talent, and effort to do it.

Then we started looking for a place and focal point to put these folks. We looked at all kinds of things. The British offered us some guards they were moving out. Beward of Brits that are moving out of something and want to give you something. As my Chief of Staff Bob Griddick said, "That should be a training ground for bulldozer operators." They had stripped all the fixtures, all of everything, and wanted to give to us a good deal. We didn't accept that. We went out and we found in Limburg, what became known as the Rug Factory. The Rug Factory had just been that, a rug factory. It was about a nine story building in Limburg, Germany, at the focal point of all these people that lived in that area. The area was with rail, with highway, and with an empty building that was available for sixteen million dollars. That building is better by far than both office buildings as far as it's structure, it's ability, and its capability. We start moving soldiers up there and we started to put a little commissary, a little PX, a resturant, a medical building, some dental buildings, and some other things. It has grown now to be the focal point for northern Germany. They had a long debate with Congress about whether or not that was a good deal. I didn't. The Germans did that for us. The Germans were willing to buy the ground. The only way to do was to buy the land and do the improvements. Some four years later, that's done.

But for the next two years, last year of my tour in Germany, and for three years as the IG, I continued to justify with Congress and senators why we needed Limberg. Limberg is now a reality. Limberg is a necessary place. It's another community in Germany. It serves the need of soldiers and their family members. That's why we need Limberg. They didn't ask to go there. There are no Seven-Elevens in that area. There are no Orals Video Stores. there's almost nothing there: no schools, no other things. Limberg serves a useful purpose for al those folks. It's a very interesting place. It's hard to get into being. But it finally is and it won't go away. It's there because it serves the needs of soldiers. Now that's a remote location.

The other thing, I guess, on speaking of remote locations, we did reasonably well was handling the needs of soldiers in remote locations such as Flensburg. Flensburg was on the Danish border. I convinced the local Germans to build, to put the money into, and finance a commissary building. So that we could put a real live honest to goodness commissary up in Flensburg which served the northernmost part of German. I guess the biggest thing that I ever heard of was when we opened the commissary. I went to witness it. We put a little school and a few other things for the people stationed up there. A lady said to me that I didn't know that we still had frozen foods. All we got was canned stuff until now. It was really a necessary thing in that area. But that's the kind of thing we worked on in remote areas.

One of the best people doing that was Colonel (now Brigadier General) Jerry McConnel who was in Bremerhaven. He did remote work very well. He got open cells in Karisruhe and did it very well. Most communities under Sonny Smith who is one of the finest colonels that I know, did very well in Worms.

You wouldn't think that Worms was a remote community unless you are sitting on top of the mountain where you can't get up when it snows and you carry your water up and things like that. They you know you are in a remote community. If you get a remote community right outside of Allawurg and if you can'g get there, soldiers are not taken care of. But that was one of the other things of emphasis that we put on and it worked very well.

All the time that this is going on, I had the benefit of having the same boss who in my four years in the association in Germany, called me fourteen times. That was General Kroessen once you got to get promoted. Once we upgraded the job. When do you want to get promoted? He also fought off the Eagles, for instance, and called me when the Eagles would win. If you wanted to work under ideal conditions, that was it. I say we had the advantage of knowing all of the Corps commanders. I would up with General Bill Luzi and Bo williams who were superb guys. We weren't in any contest with each other. We were in the business of working for the same guy with one purpose. That was practicing in peacetime what we were going to do in war and be ready to do it first class which we did, I think.

Recently, I went to a party with General Kroessen. I said, "You know, probably the best four years of my life were as a commander while working for you." His comment was, "I thought that you and all those guys you had and all those logisticians that you had working for you were ready to go when and if we had a war. I knew yo could do it somehow or another no matter what your resources were." To me, that was a great compliment.

Those guys were Loui, who is now a three star General; Charlie Brown, who is now a three star General; Jean Stillions, who is now a two star General; Sam Wakefield, who is now a two star General. That doesn't mean that only the guys who became Generals were responsible for it. I go back to the Bradleys, the whites, and the Van Houtons, and those kinds of folks. The Billys thought that there had to be a General. But those are the folks. The Warners and the civilians are who did that. Frank get an award at the Secretary of the Army's awards ceremony. The Brugmans and the Zieglers run the depot. There were a whole group of folks like that who make things happen. The German labor serive made things happen. It was an old Polish connection: Showalsky, Lowendalsky, and Ribichensky. They are the last holdovers from the people that left Poland during the war and they are the kind of people that made things go. That's the strength of working along.

You have to get down to the next lighter because of the amount of green suiters that we had there. The next strength of the 21st was the quality of the E-9s and E-8s in key staff positions. Every section had, in my opinion, a superb E-9 or E-8 that was an expert in his career field and who was able to keep his boss fully informed and out of trouble. They made the world go around. We developed enough coaches and players to make it go very well. About all that I can say is that after you do something for years, you begin to wonder. You see three or four people rotating under you. It can get old. But there was always something new and challenging going on.

The other thing was the beneficiaries of good funding at the time that the German economy was down a little bit. We got good funding. The economy was down. So we got a lot of things done, moe things done for investment than you would in normal times. You get things done now when the market is down

and the economy is good. You can hire as many contractors. We hit all three legs of the stool right at the right time; funding, economy on the downturn where we had contractors wanting to work just to keep the workforce together, and a good exchange rate on the market. A lot of things that needed to get done got done.

Again, we would have the greats and the near greats come over and they were wanting to know where all of their money is going. You just couldn't show them painted buildings because that's the average. I would take them down in sewers and electrical power plants and show them how we were putting heat back in the buildings that didn't have heat or had inadequate heat or had uneconomical heat. They were putting windows in buildings that were so drafty that you would not survive in them. That's the kind of thing that helped make it go around.

MAJ HUNTER: Let me ask you. At this point, I would think there would be a sense of retirement on the horizon. Most people fill a three star billet and that's their last billet. But unlike those people, you get a second chance at a three star billet.

LTG THOMPSON: Once in a while I say to General Kroessen, "When are we going home? Because then I had been in Europe for four years. I had the good fortune of having my daughter's husband stationed in Europe at that time. My son was stationed in Europe at that time. My youngest son was with me and my two other children came to visit often as everybody else I knew in the States. So that wasn't had. My wife would get to go home every six months to visit. The daytime activities didn't get to you. But you become so rapped up in the nighttime social structure that you would have to declare sundays were yours except for QUICKLINK. The rest of the time we were up to our suspenders in going places and doing things.

We hade some great German friends. They were lifelong friends to the point when I did retire, four of them came over to the States, never having been here before. They came to my retirement party and parade and they brought themselves over. We had some very good friends.

I was told before I went to Europe, that I was going there for two years as a Major General. When I come back, I would be the Commander at Fort Eustis. About that time, the Commander would be ready to rotate. I thought that was great because I had done verything else at Fort Eustis except command the place. I thought that it would be a good deal since I liked tidewater and Williamsburg. But that was not to be.

When I got promoted, I accepted that fact. When you get promoted, you sign a letter to the Chief of Staff saying that you will accept this appointment and this appointment only because the day I became a three star General, that was the day I became a permanent Major General and had tenure to 35 years service. So it was almost to the day. It was four days difference in those two acts.

I signed the letter accepting the fact that I would have to reitre. The only apprehension that I had was that retiring from overseas would be a little more difficult because I was assured that I would be sent home for thirty days and you could sort it all out and retire. At that time, the 1983 time frame,

everybody said, "Where are you going? What are you going to do?" There were all kinds of rumors and counterrumors about who was taking my place. I knew three months before it happened that General Bruen was going to take my place. I wasn't at liberty to tell anybody and I didn't.

About two months before I came home, General Wickham, who was the Vice chief, came over to visit Europe. While we were driving along in the car, he said, "Congratulations on your job." I said, "What did I do? Did I get fired?" He said, "No. You are going to be my IG." I said, "That tells me who the next Chief of Staff is and why me for the IG." He said because he thought that I was qualified to do that. It would be a good job for me. I would fill that role very well. I thought that I was not at liberty to tell anybody for a while. I can tell my wife and I did. I told my son where we were going. But that's where I left it. For two months, we walked around knowing where we were going and who was coming. But we just kind of played it dumb. Then it became public when General Truffee's retirement was announced. It made it a little easier. It was very funny because I used to kid my IG. Tell them not to knock IGs. You may be one someday. I was. it came along to help me. I go back to about the time that I made three stars.

One of the big adjustments I had was going from the Junior major Genral even after two years. You are still at the bottom of the pole because of the way it happened. To see General Kroessen leave the country, he said, "I'm leaving now. You have the sink. Don't screw it up." I was sure that I would not attack anybody or do anything dumb. But then when I would go to a meeting, I would get excited. My chief of Staff, and my jury, and my JAG, and my IG would all gather together and say, "Hey, you got to remember now that you got a much bigger hammer than you had before. When you swing that three star mallot, it knocks everybody out of the way. So take it easy. It's a good lesson to learn that you don't recognize, again, amplification and magnification; one to two to three. You don't recognize it. But somebody recognizes it for you. It causes confusion at some points."

The Germans were very happy that they finally got that job back up to three stars. They thought that you were the biggest employer in that area. You were the bigger employer in Germany. You had a lot of clout when you wanted to use it properly. But by and large, I can say without question, I didn't tink I was wearing doubt. My wife thought I was. I think, well, where else would the money be? It was the night schedule, not the day schedule. But I thoroughly enjoyed every day I was there. Some of the things that I did recognize was that my three smart guys kept smart allick comments on me. When I left, they gave me a plaque that talks about things and comments I made when I was on management. It said that the best planning can never be replaced by dumb luck. I said, "Don't get mad. Don't get even with a hit." I mentioned the one on IGs. I said, "Don't laugh. You too may be one someday. On loyality you might be a crank. But you are my crank." On closing out a command toward someone, "I understand you are short." I said, "I may be short. But I'm not senile, come to think of it. I'm not short either." On in boxes, there must be a point under this pile of horse manure somewhere.

We had a guy who wouldn't come down to see us. He was too busy. You don't like to get too big for your britches. But on laison with other organizations, I told him that he's too busy to come don here. I'll make a house call up there. On effective communications, it was watch my lips. My

advice to bachelors was no longer early. If they don't meet your standards, lower your standards. That was some of the ones.

They had another batch that they kept track of. We had a big going away party. That was great fun. It was a stag party which took a long while. I guess one of the other significant things that happened at that time was that General John W. Vessey, who was the Vice Chief before General John A. Wickham, come over to visit. He was there the night before the training. He said, "Ross, I understand you quit smoking cigars for life and I quit drinking beer. But tonight, we are going to go to your favorite guest house", which was always the Roman Vice. It was a little place called the Zoomadil. It was too far to go to the Club and people need to see Germany instead of eating rubber chicken. So we take them there. So I want to go up to that place. I've been there before. So we went. I took five or six of my senior 0-6s and my Deputy with me. That's where we learned the next day they were going to announce him as the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff. So we sat there. When I left the house that night about seven o'clock, General Vessey went with me. He said, "What time are you due back?" I said that we would probably be back early because he probably wanted to go to bed.. He's leaving in the next couple of days. We went and about three o'clock in the morning we came home because we sat there and listened to General Vessey describe how he got to be the Chairman. He described how he took lessons on Chairman 101 from the former Chairman Lemmitzer and other people.

Probably one of the best rite sharing in experience is a soldier listening to a super soldier, lay it out all for him, and level with people. The interesting thing was after General Kroessen had a shot at it. So riding in Rheimstein Air Base, he was standing there. As he went through the gate, I showed the guard my ID card through the roll-down. You couldn't roll the window down. You got to open the door of this armour sedan you had. He said, "What about him?" I said that I would vouch for him. He said, "No. You won't." General Vessey looked at me and said, "Ross, he's just doing his job. He took out his ID card and showed it to him very carefully which boggled this guy's mind. But he never got ruffled by it.

The next morning, we were getting ready to leave for Lemstein to fly off to Manaheim to visit some of our soldiers. It was quiet hour because it was Good Friday. From seven till twelve was quiet hour. So now we woke up after seven o'clock in the morning after a long night. Commander General Barry Oaks was an Air Force General who is now a three star General. He's the frist Air Force Academy graduate to become a Genral Officer in the Air Force who was practicing organ. He was one of the finest gentleman I know. He was a superb guy and he was an OAKS [Older American Corps]. He was standing there as the Wing Commander saluting smartly with his Air Force two-way walkie-talkie in hand. We were all strapped in the plane when the pilot turned around and said, "I got a problem." I said, "What's your problem?" He said, "We can't start the engine." I said, "Why?" He said, "It's quiet hour and they won't let us start until after noon. The only one that can change that is the Wing command." I said, "that was simple. There he is over there. Salute him." So I reached out and I said, "Hey Bob, come here." He came over and I told him when are we going to leave. He said that we would accept that it was quiet hour and only one commander can authorize to start the engine. Would you see if your walkie-talkie works and call the tower and tell him it's okay? That's the only time I heard him swear. He stepped back and General Vessy

reached up to the pilot and we said, "Don't worry son. Somebody is going to solve your problem" With that, the engine started and away we went. But that shows you the stories of General Vessey. They are all true. He was very unimpressed with his own importance, very unimpressed with what other people think is important, but always impressed with being nice to people, and being considerate of other folks. He was a great individual. I guess that's one of the other highlights. We had all sorts of SECDEF people and everybody else was coming to visit.

The most important part of that whole tour was watching things get better for soldiers at this point: the facilities, the PXs, the commissaries, the living conditions, everything about the whole community, child care centers, hospitals, barracks, and hardstands to work in. That was the significant thing.

The other thing that made it nice to come back for the next three years was to look at all those things. Somebody asked me, "When do you stop?" It was announced that we were going to change out and go back and he the IG. He said, "Well, what do you want to get done?" I said that we did not want to start any new initiatives. We don't want to play super bowl. We want to play tidy bowl. We want to clean up what's on the table wherever we can and not start on things that the next guy will have to change or won't be happy with. so I did talk to General Bruen quite a bit about what was going on and where it was going on. He spent the next two months going around visiting places to find out what he needed to know to come over there. I just think that you can waste too much time doing that and you thought you would just go start and do it. it works just as well either say.

But what we did was two weeks before we left there, we moved out of the house so that we could get it fixed up for him. We moved up into the BOQ [Bachelor Officer's Quarters] and the last two weeks were just one big happy meeting orgy. The night there, along 1983, we had a change of command. That night, we spent the night in the BOQ and we flew out the next morning and came home. We went back to our own house, and our own place for the first time in the same house. I was offered the chance at McGuire or McNair or wherever I wanted to live in the Washington area. I elected to live in my own house. That's one of the things that I discussed with Mr. Weinberger when I went from being a Commander of the 21st to becoming the IG. It was how to go get in there and doing it again. So when we talked about it, I said that there were three things I like to do. One was live in my own house. He asked me why. I said, "For three reasons. (1) I want my son to go to the same high school for a couple of years. That's a good high school. (2) I like to live in my own house because if I ever decide to sell it, I need to take advantage of the tax advantage from doing that. (3) If I didn't like the job and didn't want to stary, I could have quit and not have to move. If they didn't like what I was doing, they could fire me. I wouldn't have to move and that would make it simple." So I got to move into my own house and that was it. A lot of people were upset because they waited to get a houseboy and all those things. My wife said that she was tired of training houseboys.

We had the good fortune to have a General work for us by the name of Emanual F. Spiker who was an enlisted aide for about three years. But not knowing what I was going to do, he retired and came on home. Then we had a series of guys tht came and went. Then we got tired. It was like raising

another child. My wife would never get used to it. We were happy without that. The only advantage to that was when you had so mahy parties, you had someone to clean after you. You and your wife weren't doing it all the time. That was the only advantage. Other than that, you didn't need someone full time running around your house because we had, relatively, a small house. It's smaller than what I live in now. We used that guy now to help rake leaves. So all the people with the role looses the guy. The IG didn't have a house. Trefry had been a bachelor when he took the job and he lived down Center Row. so he didn't live on post. so there was a precedence established about generals and doctors that were retired. McNair has a house boy. that's different strokes for different folks. We enjoyed it very much. That was quite a shock to come into the IG level. General Woodcom was doing the job. I was doing the job.

General Trefry had started some things to go to systematic inspections instead of the old dirt wall, sweep under the bed, shine the bottom of your shoes, and clean the brass on the back of your buckle. He also started Norther Mason to automate the IG system. He had put together what was going to be an E-7 thirteen weeks of school. He got in the middle of it and put a guy by the name of Wilson out there. Colonel Wilson told them that the school would be adequate to train IGs, but one thing it wouldn't be. It wouldn't be for thirteen weeks. You couldn't afford thirteen weeks of a guy out of the system to go on a one year tour or to go on a two year tour. So we came up with a six week alternative. It does pretty well. It's now become one of the better schools. When you get there, you are a board certified IG who is great ground squall not to have NCOs [Non-Commissioned Officers] to go to the school. You have a few to go to NCOC [Non-Commissioned Officer's Course]. In the world, you find the NCOs are pretty much prevalent in majority. So if you are going to send them, send them out. You ought to send them out with a full deck, not a short deck. So I resisted that and one one has changed that since. Everybody goes if you are going to be an IG or you will not get to be an IG.

The other significant thing about being an IG is that you handpick everybody and I did that down to the e-6 level where it was going to meet an IG. Again, as only 1800 people and if they rotate 600 a year, that's only 600 you got to look at. Break that down to four or five a day, once a week. It's not too many if you are going to do the job right. Did we fire any? Yes. I would say in the course of my three years as the IG, we fired six or seven people usually because of a couple of cases they were not compatable with the Commander. It didn't work. So there was no sense in putting everybody through misery. In three or four cases, there were people who voilated not only the code of an IG, but the code of an officer of a non-commissioned officer. So there is no sense in having a bad apple out there brusing the system. So we got rid of those people for the good of the service. Those three or four went out of the Army, not just out of the IG business. They were such characters that they didn't deserve it. So we saw fit to get rid of that.

What did I learn as an IG or what are good things to know about an IG? That it can be a force for good or a force for evil. It can be a hit man or you can do what the IG from the days of Wonsteibin is supposed to do and that is teach. It teached how to do things right, teached how to make things work, and teached how to get to the root cause of problems because the IG doesn't

I learn these things. People say, "Oh yes, the IG is coming. Look out whether they be investigations or inspections or anything else. Take a break there." But the true value of the IG system was the General Trefy structured it. He structured it in the way he tried to carry it forward. Since then, in the next three years, it was to get away from the hit man mentally, and get into the what's wrong with the system, what needs to be fixed, who can fix it, and where do you plug in to get it fixed. In overtime, it took a long time to convince people to change that.

I guess the most significant challenge I had as the IG is that it happened first in December of 1983 when I went up to see the Chief As the IG, I had open access to the Chief and the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Army because they were the only two people you really work for. I recognized that four beats three beats two beats one and glued for the vice. But you technically only worked for two people. I would go up and bet them after I take a trip or if he sent me out to look at something to get my impression of what I had seen. At that time, he was looking for a commanding inspection program and he wanted the IG to go out and do all of the inspections of the commands. I did not agree with them.

He had mentioned this to me. So I put a very smart Lieutenant Colonel to work who put together a one page letter on how command inspections should be done. So about two days before Christmas where there weren't too many people in the building and the Chief had some time, we spent three hours late at might, in the afternoon, and the early evening hours talking about the command inspection program and how since the days when we got away with Saturday morning inspections and did away with those. The Commander has lost his ability to inspect and do the things that a Commander should do and be able to inspect his troops and find out their true state of the art. Either days, you run paydays, looked at every soldier, checked his ID card, his dog tag, his shot record, his haircut, his uniform, paid him, and knew that you still had him on the rolls. When they went away, we lost something. Now that advocated when we got back to that. But we should find some substitute to make sure we are still in charge. Because your first Charter Lord says take charge of the post and all government property in view. That's all your soldiers all the time. So after a long discussion, he finally agreed that it was not the IG responsibility to do the command inspection. But that the IG should teach commanders how to do the command inspections. And that was a command responsibility. Three years later, I think we had fully implemented that.

Why did it take that long? primarily because you try not to impose your will on people. You go out and explain to them why it is a better way of doing business. And in the course of three years, I would go and talk to every battalion commander, brigade commander, PCC [Pre-command Course] at Fort Leavenworth. In the course in doing that, I explained with the why's and the where

fore's and the hot-it should-be's. I would guess it would

be about seventy percent acceptance of why that should be done. In the course of three years, I talked to every battalion commander, every brigade commander serving the United States Army. IF I only got a seventy percent acceptance rate, I won a majority of their hearts and minds. Their bodies will follow their leader. So I think by patience, and just hanging in there, we finally got a command inspection system which in the Commander's inspection system.

The role of the IG again is to teach and the role of the IG is to find what systems are broken and get them fixed. This will probably go full cycling and someone will find a better way or want to do it his way. The current IGs continued on with that. Now he's got a new Chief of Staff and I think that the Chief of Staff is committed to it. But that too will change overtime. You will see it evolve. But I think the best role for the IG to play is that of a teacher. As the IG, you are privileged to many different assorted functions. You are responsible for inspections worldwide. When we stopped doing the annual general inspections, it was a great welling and gnashing of teeth by commanders that they will never see the IG.

We started to do systematic inspections. An example was the Family Action Plan. To do that, we picked a cross section of places around the world. Therefore, we got to visit every command. Then when we would go do the Ammunition Account Brilliance Examination, you pick out another cross section and you get to visit every command. After about a year and a half commanders say, "I see too much of the IG." I say that this is the same guy. You will never see him. But when you look at the whole system, you have to look at it worldwide and it's impact in totality, not just in pieces. so we'd gotten over that with the Commander. The Commander doesn't feel that he is going to get any attention.

The other significant thing that I think we got out of the IG system was convincing the Commander that it was his IG. I had the power to hire and fire and did that. But in the significant IG jobs, I would call the Commander and see if there was a disconnect between him and someone else on a personality basis or ask him if he had anyone that he specifically was interested in being his IG. I did this so that we had the right mix of the right match and the right people working together as a team. It was a unique relationship between the Commander and the IG. I, Chief of Staff, controlled most everything except three people: the Public Affairs Officer, the IG, and the Chaplain. Everybody else, he had control of. You could talk to them. Now I throw another one in, the JAG [Judge Advocate General]. He didn't have control of the JAG. He may run their staff, do things, and make sure they get things done. It was administratively correct. But as far as the personal contact and control, he had non. That's the significant thing in the IG. It can be a big influence for

good or bad.

Another thing that really got you down as an IG is that you would up as the patron saint of helpless causes. People call you with all sorts of complaints and requests of assistance. You can get enmeshed in the bad things in the world and loose sight of the good. Or you can get so enamored or obsessed with why people would do dumb things like that you could loose your sense of direction.

The other thing that is sometimes discouraging is that people call you up when they make allegations or request assistance and you know it is not true. You know it is a lie and a get go. But you have to go through that whole administrative process to prove it false. Instead of being the hit man for the Army, I used to go and talk to the new Brigadier Generals Course and say, "When you are in trouble, your best friend and your true companion if you are clean, is your friendly IG. Because he is going to put all of the resources we have down to prove that you are guilty, that you are not guilty, you are innocent, and not that. Someone can't make a false alligation against you. I would guess that ninety-five percent of the allegations made by people or ninety percent are found to be unfounded. Most times it is perception of what people think they see and not what they really see. By cleaning that up, you do some wonderful things. That's not to say that we didn't find many people guilty of indiscretions.

At the four star level, I personally would go read the rights to the people that were being allocated against. It makes it easier for the investigators if you go do it and set their mandates straight. then you bring in a couple of smart guys because you put yourself in the place of the Lieutenant Colonel or Colonel. He is going out to talk to some Major General and say that you have been accused of all sorts of things. He is at a disadvantage unless his boss goes there and clears the way. IF you ever put up with a big enough hole that these guys can jog through or jump and do it, very well. When you get your first round draft choice, you don't get too many duds going out to do things for you.

What is their job in the Army? Do you get your first round draft choice in every job? None that I know of. So I went from the sublime to the ridiculous or vice-versa between 0 for 35. Who do I want? Not purposely, but knowingly I went out and selected some people that I knew that would not get promoted. But they had the technical expertise in particular subjects that I wanted. I accepted that fact because I don't think that anybody should have 100 percent promoted or 100 percent everything. That's wrong. It is as wrong as getting none.

But the other thing I tried to do and I am not well on using the names or examples of people was they did things. Because

someone is always trying to guess who is he talking about. I can write four or five books on case histories of people that I can talk about. But that's not the purpose. The purpose of the IG was to get to the root cause of the problem and fix it. Although as we did as the IG, we had tested General Trefry at a test case because a couple of IGs at stake stayed IGs. I pilfered that until now we have an IG in every state in the National Guard unit as the state IG.

I made one hard and fast rule and only broke it once. That was because I knew the individual and knew he was going to retire and he had done a good hard job as an IG. He would not go to your home state to be the IG in that state. That broke up the old boy net so that they wouldn't say, "Well, I got a guy." In fact, one governor and his AG kept beating me to death that they wanted one of their good old boys to be the IG and I refused. He kept telling me. Well, you did that in such and such a state with so and so." I said, "Yes. He worked for me for three years. He had some personal problems and that's why I did it. I'll never do it again." I didn't. But now we got that and that system has worked also. What does that do? That puts an independent conscious or Jimmy Cricket with some regular Army smarts out there helping some regular Army smarts out there helping cross that bridge between guard and active Army. It is a very good program. It works very well. It gets good results.

The other thing we did was automate the IG. system. With BIGNET, you could transmit data, transmit allegations and transmit mail, and just automate the system. It's in being and about fifty percent of the IG system now is a function of money and hard to do. It's hard to get acceptance because people didn't want to share their things back and forth. They are afraid they will be used against them by their commanders. But we convinced people, after two years of doing it, that we didn't use comparative analysis on statistics we gathered. We used it to fund out what the problems were. Is it a payroll problem? It is a household goods problem? Is it some other kind of problem? get to the root of the problem and go solve it. It's not by commander. It's not by firing the commander or anything of that nature. This is not to say that you can use it. I know some people who take some big falls. Some people got out of the Army because of IG investigations or IG inspections. But regardless, the problem they had was not doing their job or doing it illegally, immorally, or unjust. Therefore, they should have been fired in the first place. It worked very well. What are the lessons learned from the IG business. You don't have to be a hit man to do it.

The other lesson I learned in the IG is that you spend a lot of time on the road. You could literally go all the time. We tried not to do that. We scattered it out and we put different people on the road. We had a road to take people between Jasme because some of there were getting stale from sitting around working long hours. Some were gone for days at a time and they had to swap some people out as we did. you get burned out when

you do some of those things. So we did that. The other significant thing was that the school proved to be a big winner. It was such a winner that the DOD sends it's IG people there. The GAO [General Accounting Office] sends people there. Triple A sends people there. Other IG agencies need people there to learn how the Army runs it and how to be IGs. So that is a success story.

But the whole IG business to me was that I wasn't sure how I got to be the IG. But once getting there, I found out that you can use that system to not only learn yourself. Because by the time you get to that point in your career, you have done learning. You are in a strictly paid back position. I think it's significant that you send someone to the IG as an internal assignment. I think it's the right thing to do. Then they have no hate agenda and hopefully they achieved the status on life where they have learned the things they need to do that job. In my particular case, I had no desire or designs on going someplace else. One asked and I refused to go someplace else. I enjoyed the job everyday I was there. When asked to stay another year, I decided that it was time to retire because it was time to retire.

MAJ HUNTER: Why is that?

LTG THOMPSON: You come to the point where it's time for someone else to play that game. I had the good fortune of being on the board of managers of the AER [Army Emergency Relief] when I was the IG. Having understood how it works, I was offered the job. That's now why I retired. I retired because it was time to retire. After filling all of the blocks, it was time for someone else to have the chance to do what needed to be done.

But the IG is a unique position and you can use it for force of good or evil. You would, once in a while, find a commander who is still not using the IG properly. He would become enamored with the idea that it was still a hit team. You could see that image.

Another thing we did with the IG business is that General Trefry used to have a yearly conference. We put that conference together and made it the second week in January because we got better hotel rates at that time. There weren't many people in town. We bring all of the IGs from around the world in one place. Also the senior staff of the Army and the Secretary of the Army, the Assistant Secretary of the Army came up and talked to them all. They got the latest policy. So they all got of on the same foot. So the IG had a special little place. They had the chance to come back, get regulated, get all of the latest information, to out and tell their boss what's going on. it was a good step forward.

What did it cost? It cost about a quarter of a million dollars. But in that way, everybody got the same gospel at the same time. We would sit down and take the IG regulations. We would take all the things that people found that they saw, glitch

es or gimmicks in the system, and resolve them at one big meeting. Everybody got it out of their system at one time, a good way to go. It's not cheap, but worthwhile. so it worked pretty well. In the IG business, I had a series of deputies. I had lots of folks come and go: General Robert B. Solomon, Corpal, Doctor, Watson, and foote. So again even in a three year span, they come and they go. But I say the strength of the IG organization is again in the number of folks that have been there for a while. A gal as the Secretariat of the IG, Mrs. Barbara Lattini has been there for about four IGs. She got the job at a very young age. She's a very mature person who knows how to get things done. When you want to organize something, you put her in charge and step back. You have to understand that. She's competent in her own right. You don't have to question anything she does.

This was the other thing that we tried to do in the IG business. I was questioned as to why I didn't have a Sergeant Major in the IG. Everybody had a Sergeant Major on their staff doing something. My rationale was that the Sergeant Major of the Army had the job to be the eyes and ears of the Chief of Staff for Enlisted matters. I asked the IG who was the eyes and ears for officer matters and other matters. I had a sergeant Major. He would be surprising some of the duties of the Sergeant Major of the Army. If I let him do that, I would have a Sergeant Major sitting in the office to answer the phone, make coffee, and do other things which a very competent GS-10 secretary was capable of doing full time with no help from him. It would be a waste of talent. What I did was to convert three or four slots in the investigations and inspections business and put senior enlisted men, E-8s and E-9s, in those jobs because they have a better feel for the soldier than some of those officers who could not make that translation. So that worked very well.

I think that was one of the other contributions we made towards the IG system. We put the right sorts of Non-commissioned Officers in there. that became very good because the Sergeant Major of the army and I would have a monthly conference where he would tell me what he had seen. I would tell him what I had seen. We exchanged ideas. If I had a Sergeant Major, it was him. If he had a senior officer in charge tell him what is going on, I was that guy. There were lots of challenges.

We did lots of investigations. You had to go and testify before the greats and near greats as to the purity or chastity of some people.. You get to review every Brigadier General's list and every Major General's list to find if there are any hidden secrets in the closet. So you get to know a lot of people. The less you have to say, the better off you are because a secret is something known only to one person. The integrity, the honesty, and the sincerity of people that work in the IG [Inspector General] business is very high. Those people do a good job. As I saw, when you are in the IG business, go talk to someone two or

three grades above you that you may work with three years from now when you are no longer an IG. It can put you in a very difficult position. But I used to tell the story at the IG conference that as I mentioned earlier in the tape about the IG at Fort Story. I could beat any IG in the world just by knowing what he is looking for: shining the murals, painting the floors, and doing all those wonderful things.

As the Seventh Group Commander, Opal Johnson was the IG at Fort Eustis. He came down to visit me for an IG inspection in 1971 or 1972, I guess. When he got there, I said, "Here are some of the things I want you to look at." He said, "Oh no, this is what I am going to look at?" I said, "No. you are my IG." He said that he was General Schiltz's IG. I said, "Do you notice any IGs in the Seventh Group staff?" He said, "No." I said, "Then you are my IG and this is what I need help in. You will look at these things while you are here." That boggled his mind. So he left. HE didn't come back for two weeks for an outside IG inspection while he sorted out what I wanted him to look for and to get his mind set straight. He went back to talk to my boss and his boss, General Schiltz. He came back.

What did that do for me? It got me two weeks to get ready for the IG. That wasn't my purpose. My purpose was that there were some things that I wanted to know about that I didn't have the time or talent to look into. He did it and it worked well. Without even knowing what I was doing, we were talking about systems problems and the proper use of IG which I got into some ten years later as the IG. Many thoughts I had about being the IG were slim enough. It never crossed my mind. But it worked.

The role of the IG is one that we shouldn't forget. We should use it properly. We should use it to enhance learning, teaching, helping soldiers, solving things, and not being a hit man. I can go on and on about the IG stories. But that was just, again, people guessing who is he talking about. IGs are necessary evils if there is always going to be one. There has been one rather than continuing to using to make sure. Any officer that's assigned as the IG is not the end of your career. You can become a professional IG. Some officers, I know, wanted to stay on and on and again repeat tours.

For some people, it doesn't hurt. But if you want to be a full time professional in the United States Army, do everything that comes your way. Do it the best you can. You get on with it and get on to the next job. don't settle in the comfort zone in any one job, even if it is the IG job when you are very comfortable, when you can enjoy doing that, and be immune from a lot of other things. That goes for whatever job I've had. I've had some good jobs and some bad jobs. Some jobs included bookstore, commissary, all sorts of things that I didn't go into detail about. But I guess the strength of it is go do whatever job you get the best you can for as long as you can and you will succeed on it. You shouldn't go out with the idea what's this going to

do to help me get promoted? What's my efficiency report going to look like? How is this going to affect my career? Because I see so many people that are so wrapped around the axle about what's good for their career.

Why they can't move is because their wife has a good job or they are tied to the house with their kids only starting kindergarten here. They want to graduate from high school in the same school. I have five children who I declare a success in life. Three changed high school in their senior year. All five have moved to many many schools over the years. I would stack up against any five adult human beings in the United States who lived their entire life in some sheltered community. They have the depth of knowledge and the degree of experience that few others will ever have.

So I guess I'm telling you is that, plus you have better have a wife who is fully supportive. I don't mean that wives have to be out soliciting or carrying favor with other wives or anything else. The best thing the wife can do for you is to take care of your family. My wife has done that for many years. Her strength has been always there when all those kids needed her, in being fully supportive wherever I had to move, or wherever I had to go TDY, or wherever I had to go off on some weird short tour. She accepted that fact. She may not like it, but accepted it and made the most of it. She has done a tremendous job of being the resident mother in charge. I say, again, that it's a lot harder to be a father than it is to be a General or any other grade.

The other thing I guess I would talk about is that we have many people in the Army who are obsessed with the idea that they want only the upper one-third of officers assigned to their command. The Army cannot work that way. You know that in the Chief of Staff's office, the Vice Chief's office, and the Secretary's office, are all these other wonderful jobs plus the battalion commanders, brigade commanders, all the CAS [Combined Arms and Services Staff School in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas], and all these senior service colleges. That's where the upper one-third is. They don't have time to go serve in the menial tasks in other units and assignments. They are all wrapped in some career progression. So what I'm telling you is that you have to take the other two-thirds. The lower two-thirds of the people that serve in the United States Army are probably three cuts ahead above of what you are going to get in some other industries as you go wandering around the world because the honesty and integrity is very good. We live in a very sheltered society. I say we, (the Army) and its military people live in a very sheltered society.

It's a profession not as old as the oldest one. But it is pretty old and it is a profession. It's a calling. I have a good friend who was a police commissioner in a major city who said he had been in the seminary. He had been in the Army and then he was then a police commissioner of a major city. He said if he had to reverse it all and picked the one he thinks he would

have been happiest with, he would have stayed in the Army because the seminary just didn't quite fit him. But it had the same degree of integrity and honesty that the Army had. He had to compromise more in civilian life than he did on any other job. It is a great place. Anyone that belittles or you see now people say why do we need to pay soldiers so much money?

Why do they do all these things? We pay for hardships and short tours, taking down the curtains, putting up the curtains, moving around, and changing kids in school, moving crackerjacks, and doing all sorts of other things that people don't understand. People in civilian life will never experience that. How many people move 29 times? When you stand on your front porch and watch all of your furniture going down the street, everything you own gives you a sinking feeling of some guy that's never moved his own personal property anyplace is driving it. somebody that dispatched never moved in their lives. It's a very insecure feeling. But put it all together, there's no greater service you can give and being responsible for your other soldiers.

Is all Army as great now as all these people say it is? It's the greatest army I've served in. IF it is, it's only great because there are a lot of people who served in the Army that went before us since we've had an army. Each one of those contributed a little bit to make this Army and the service in the best Army that there was possible. I think that there is still room for improvement to this day, your daughter or you son can serve, live in the barracks, walk the streets in the Army post, and do all things they need without harassment or discrimination or prejudice or bias or have complete total confidence in their leadership. It's not the best Army we've ever had. The true test of anyone who has been assigned to me is that I want my son or my daughter to follow him or her in combat. If that's not true, then that's not the kind of person you want working for you. We have more good than bad in the Army. But as in all societies, everything is not perfect. The world is not perfect. But our Army, I think, is a cut above all the other things that have happened.

People say, "Well, as a Transportation officer, how do you succeed by going and doing whatever they send you to do, and whenever they send you to do it. What are your chances? They are no better or no worse as a TC officer than are in anything else. If you do the job, have the good fortune to work for the right people, be in the right place at the right time, and perform your job to the best way possible, you will succeed. What is success? Success is happiness in your own life and being able to share yourself and not having any regrets about what you do. It is not always who got to be the General. I know some colonels that are much happier than some Generals I know of who worry about getting two or three or four or what they get to be in charge of. There are some few of those that worry move about that than they should. So I guess in some that it's been a lot of fun.

If I had to do it over again, I would try it all over again. I'm fortunate because when I retired, I came to a job where I still work with, work around, and mix up with soldiers every day. If it wasn't for that, I guess I would miss it more than I do in life. My withdrawal symptoms would be bigger and better because my wife said that she was determined she wasn't going to be my only soldier. So go get a job someplace. This is the ideal place to do that. I had the good fortune to be able to maintain contacts with many friends both in the Army and more specifically, in the Transportation business.

As you heard throughout this long worn out windy session, I named a lot of people who have had a great influence on what I do. I probably could take you off several of them. But there's a couple of people that go unnamed that I watch grow up over the years or I've grown up with. I guess a fellow I met in Korea by the name of Mack Roseure, who is probably a good Christian fellow as I've ever seen in my life. He had more good influence on me because he got to be a Lieutenant Colonel. He is as successful as many people I know in life because he raised five children and he did a good job. But he was very adamant about what he wouldn't do. He ran into the wrong guys when I ran into the right guys. I succeeded where he succeeded in his own way. As I mentioned, Russ Beaver, Jim Coleman, General Jack Fuson, and General Fitz Kroessen were the people I worked for directly. There was another gentleman who had a great influence on me was General Joe Heiser, who was another one of those gems of the world who would take the time to help no matter what you were doing. I didn't mention Del Mar, Antonelli, and Murray. But again, they are people who had an influence on me. In summation, I say what you should do is learn the good and bad from everybody you work for. Try and practice the good and eliminate the bad. There was an e-9 by the name of Charlie Cainnan, very black gentleman, who worked his way from nowhere to a Master Degree. He worked with them at the T-School [Transportation School]. Charlie Cainnan used to say, "There's good, better, and best in every life. You good gets better and your better gets best." He it as well as anyone could. He never relaxed. He always tried to excel. Unfortunately, he checked on that prematurely right about the time he retired. But that is not only the Army's loss, but mankind's loss when people that don't stick around to enjoy the good things that build up for them. So if you have any questions, you want to add anything on to it, I'll talk to you later about it.

MAJ HUNTER: I was going to ask you. The main audience of this will be TOAC [Transportation Officer Advanced Course] students. they have had their first initial tour, they are seeing command on the horizon, and they are nervous about it. That anxiety, anyway, is about that future assignment. You have gone into the last three assignments not knowing everything, not being an expert, as you said, when you were at TREPS. You didn't learn about troop support, about commissaries, about APEX [Automated

Procurement Planning, Execution, and Control], and all these things when you went to the 21st Support Command. Again now, you waited for the Brigadier to get there. But you got a good person there to help you. When you became the IG of the army, again, you kind of had to come in there. What kind of advice can you give a young Captain or senior First Lieutenant about to take command or going to an assignment that's completely foreign to him. How do you help him prepare?

LTG THOMPSON: Listen. don't go with the idea that you know everything. don't go in and say you have to change everything because everything doesn't need to be changed. There's an awful lot that's been done that has been right.

One of the glaring examples I can give you in having set on promotion boards, every promotion board for every grade that there is (from Captain to Major General). I watched and read two efficiency reports. One said that this officer had raised this organization to the new heights never before achieved. About three files later, I got the officer that followed him. It talks about how this officer has raised his unit from the depths of despair to new heights. So somebody lied somewhere or somebody went in and bad-mouthed somebody, or someone went in and made changes that are costly to soldiers. It is not only monetarily, but emotionally, physically, and it doesn't move forward.

You ought to go listen for a while before you change everything. You ought to go in and find out who are the experts. Listen to them. Find out who is trying to con you. Don't be handled by some amateur. Find out who you can trust and put them in complete charge of that. Then work on the things that you are not familiar with and work on the things where you think people are giving you a snow job. But find out who is on your side. Find out who is on your side. Find out who you can trust. Find out who is an expert and don't work on their case. Work on something that you don't know much about and you will learn. You'll profit from learning from those experts. Again, build your club and you have to change.

As I mentioned earlier, I had tow different deputies in the 21st. I had three really . With the last one, I wasn't there long enough to where you had to change. But there were two diametrically opposed personalities and styles of management. Did I have to change? No. I could have been autocratic and say, "Bull, we are going to do it my way." But the impact on all the people that were there was that they were expecting something that they could become comfortable with. They were happy doing the significant. so therefore we tried to work around that and do it so that everybody was comfortable and knew that they were doing. The productivity is much better that way that trying to change everything.

It amazed me to find that I had trouble finding young guys who wanted to be company commanders and young battalion command

ers. When battalion commanders and the brigade commanders reported to the 21st, I would explain very carefully to them that I had already been a battalion commander. I had already been a brigade commander or group commander. I didn't want to do that again. If I had to do that job again, then I didn't need them to do it and I ought to get somebody else. Now if you need help, I'll help you. If you want me to do it for you, then I'll get somebody else to do it.

I must say that in four years in command there, I did not fire a brigade or battalion commander because every time something went wrong and if you will reach out and point that hand again, you will find four fingers pointing back at you and the only one out there. You share in whatever faults or misfortunes are going on out there. You ought to find out what screwed up, why it got screwed up, and how do you unscrew it. There were some things not broken. Don't go fix it. But try to be specific.

It took me a long time to learn not to fly off the handle. My dad went to the sixth grade. He taught me move than most people deserved to know. He wasn't smart. But he was street smart. He told me one time when I was still a Captain that every time you lose your temper, you loose the argument. When you loose temper, you loose control. When you loose control, you loose. Simmer down. Don't get excited. Think through the whole thing.

I mentioned to you that I worked for General William O'Rear who taught me to leave it all at the office. I can tell you to this day that I tried not to carry a wagon load of junk home with me. Instead, leave it at the office and don't carry it over into your personal life.

Don't rule by fear. You have a responsibility no matter what your position is: to train, teach, and help all those people who work for and work with you. No one knows you better than your peers. I've watched a lot of people whose superiors thought they were wonderful, whose subordinates thought they were awful, and very seldom the other way around. Very seldom your superiors thought you were bad and your subordinates think you are great. But many cases I've seen, superiors just enumerated with the performance of somebody's character who were really taking tow pounds of flesh for every soldier that worked for him. It's not a smart move.

You have a responsibility because when I retired, the Chief of Staff asked me what the biggest problem the Army had today. The biggest problem is people to the tenth power. There was nothing harder to take care of than a mixed group of folks. It's making sure you are giving them the best they are entitled to. We owe them a lot. That's what we are hired for. We can buy things. But we can't buy people.

MAJ HUNTER: Thank you sir.